

The

**HOW  
AND  
WHY**

*Wonder Book of*

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# THE CRUSADES







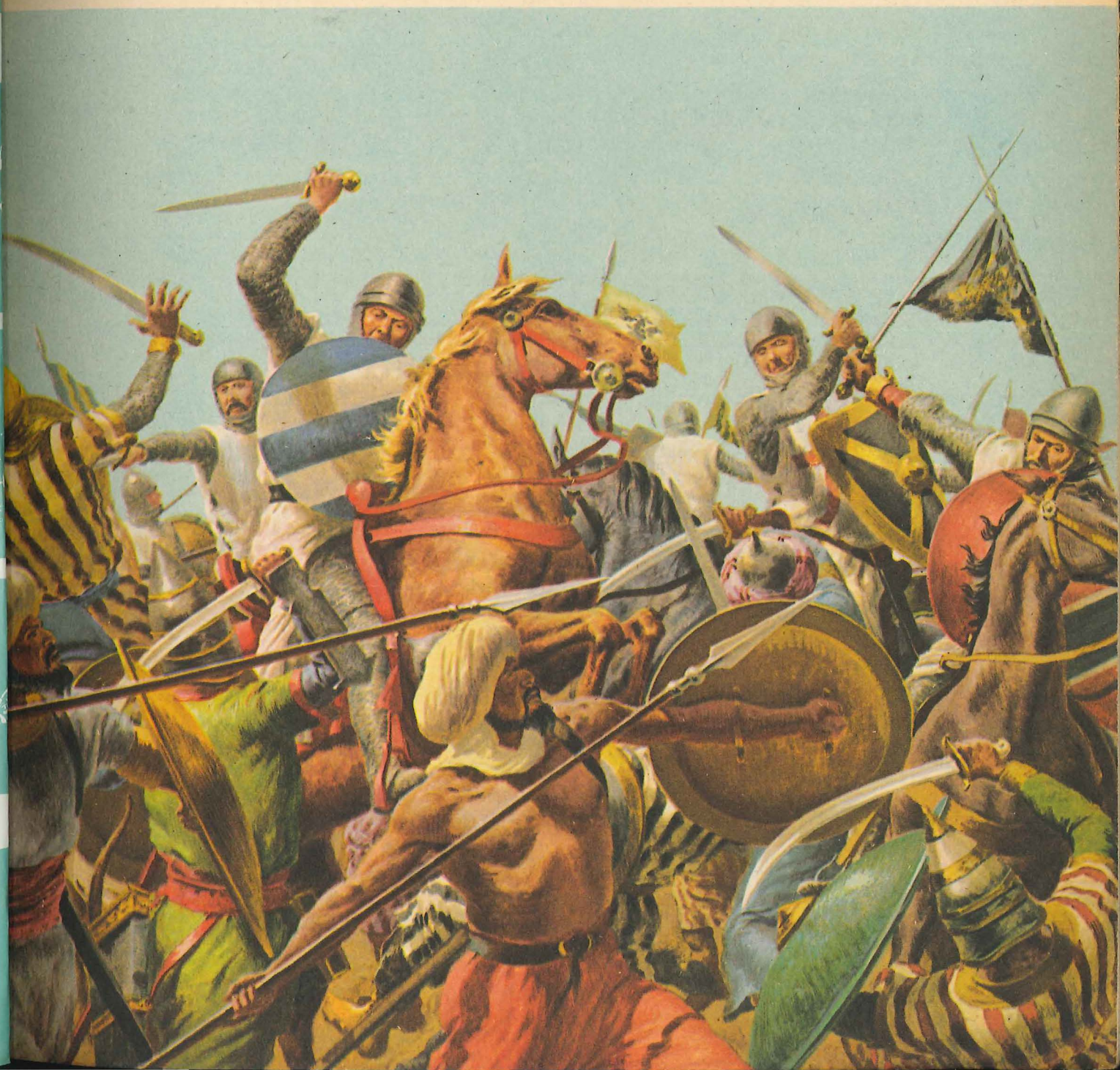


# THE HOW AND WHY WONDER BOOK OF **THE CRUSADES**

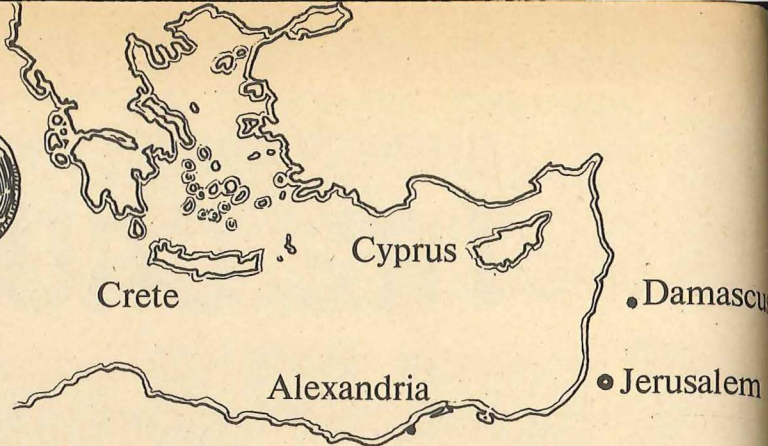
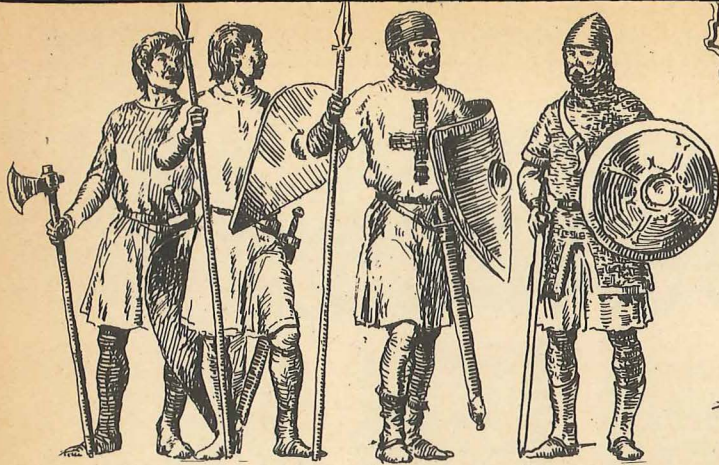
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## Introduction

One summer nearly nine centuries ago, a mass emotion gripped thousands of Europeans, an emotion which drove rich and poor alike to leave their homes and lands, relinquish their feudal allegiance to their lords and set off eastwards across the Continent. At the same time, thousands of Christian knights and soldiers armed themselves and embarked on the long, difficult and dangerous trek towards the east.

Their destination was the Holy Land of Palestine, where Jesus Christ had once lived and preached, and in particular the holy city of Jerusalem and Christ's tomb in the Holy Sepulchre. Their inspiration was the call made in 1095 by Pope Urban II, urging the Christians of Europe to undertake a crusade against the Muslim rulers of Palestine.

This First Crusade was highly successful. The crusaders captured Jerusalem and later set up Christian states in Palestine. However, the Muslims were not so easily thwarted, and over the next two centuries, because of their persistent attacks, thousands more knights and soldiers were inspired to set off on crusades to the Holy Land.

An enormous amount of faith, courage, enterprise and suffering went into the two crusading centuries, and yet the story of those centuries is not an entirely noble one. True, men performed great deeds, showed great courage and acted with great chivalry. But too many others gave way to intolerance, greed and cruelty, slaughtering innocent civilians, looting cities of their wealth and dealing with opponents in merciless and vengeful fashion.

This is why the colossal collision between Christian Europe and the Muslim East which took place during the crusades taught some men to respect and admire one another, and provoked in others only resentment, distrust and the fiercest brand of hate.

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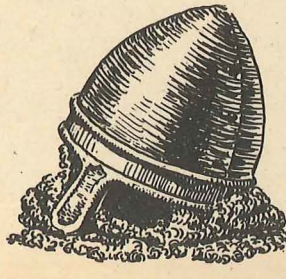
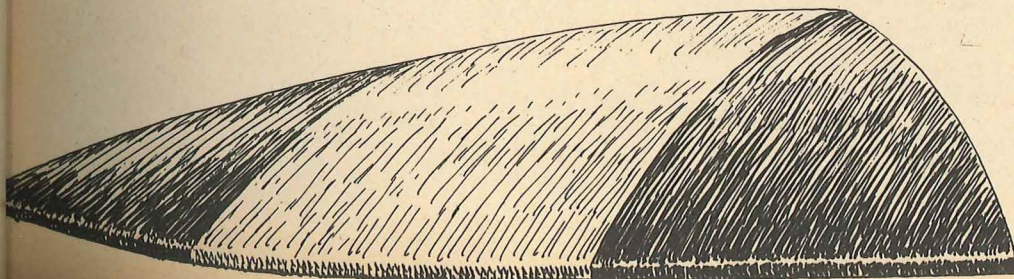
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## Prelude to the Crusades

A respectful hush fell over the great crowd of bishops and barons gathered in council at Clermont, France on 27 November 1095. The murmurs of quiet conversations faded away, and everyone's eyes turned towards Pope Urban II as he prepared to address them.

No one, of course, expected the Pope to say anything extraordinary or unusual. Councils like this one were normally just meetings for the discussion of church business. Once that was over, and the Pope had pronounced a blessing, everyone simply went home and got on with their everyday lives.

The bishops would return to their sees. Priests would go back to their

villages and resume their work guiding the peasants in their care and ensuring that they led good Christian lives. The monks would return to their monasteries and their lives of prayer and contemplation. And the great feudal barons would return to their estates and their castles, their armies of serfs and their servants.

At least, that is what everyone at Clermont expected. What they got was something totally different. The message Pope Urban had brought them completely changed their lives, their ideas and their ambitions and set them and all other Christians in Europe a new and quite revolutionary task.

Pope Urban II's message changed the history of Europe.







“Beloved brethren,” the Pope began,  
 “the Church of  
 Christ is in  
 mortal danger.  
**What did the Pope  
 say at Clermont?**

Everywhere, Christians are being murdered and tortured, their churches destroyed, their altars defiled and the Holy Cross broken and spat upon by the terrible Muslim hordes. These followers of the so-called prophet Mohamed attack unarmed pilgrims on their way to the holy places in Jerusalem and other parts of the Holy Land. They rob and kill them, kidnap the women and children and lead them away to lives of fearful slavery and suffering!”

A murmur of agreement ran through the gathering. Men nodded their heads

Christian pilgrims were frequently attacked by the Muslims.

sadly at hearing these tragic and all-too-familiar facts.

“Just as individual Christians are in danger,” Pope Urban continued, “so whole communities are in great peril. Think of the valiant Christians in Spain, who are now engaged in a violent war with the Muslims. Think of the great eastern Empire in Byzantium, which is constantly threatened by the Muslim Turks. And above all, beloved brethren, think of the Holy Land where Christ was born, lived and preached and where He died for our sins!”



Pope Urban paused. Emotion was making his voice tremble and his eyes fill with tears. Then, after a few moments, he went on: "Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Galilee—the whole country of our beloved Lord has been in the grip of the brutal Turks ever since 1071. How can we stand by and let this happen? How can we let our Lord be shamed and reviled in His own land? We must rescue Him! We must raise a great Christian army and drive the vile Muslim from the holy places in Jerusalem, and from every scrap of the holy soil which Christ once trod! I call for a great crusade of Christians everywhere! Rich and poor, powerful and humble—everyone must vow to take the Cross and go to fight in Christ's cause!"

There was an awed silence for a moment after the Pope had finished speaking. Urban could see many emotions reflected in the faces of his

**What did the Pope propose to do?**

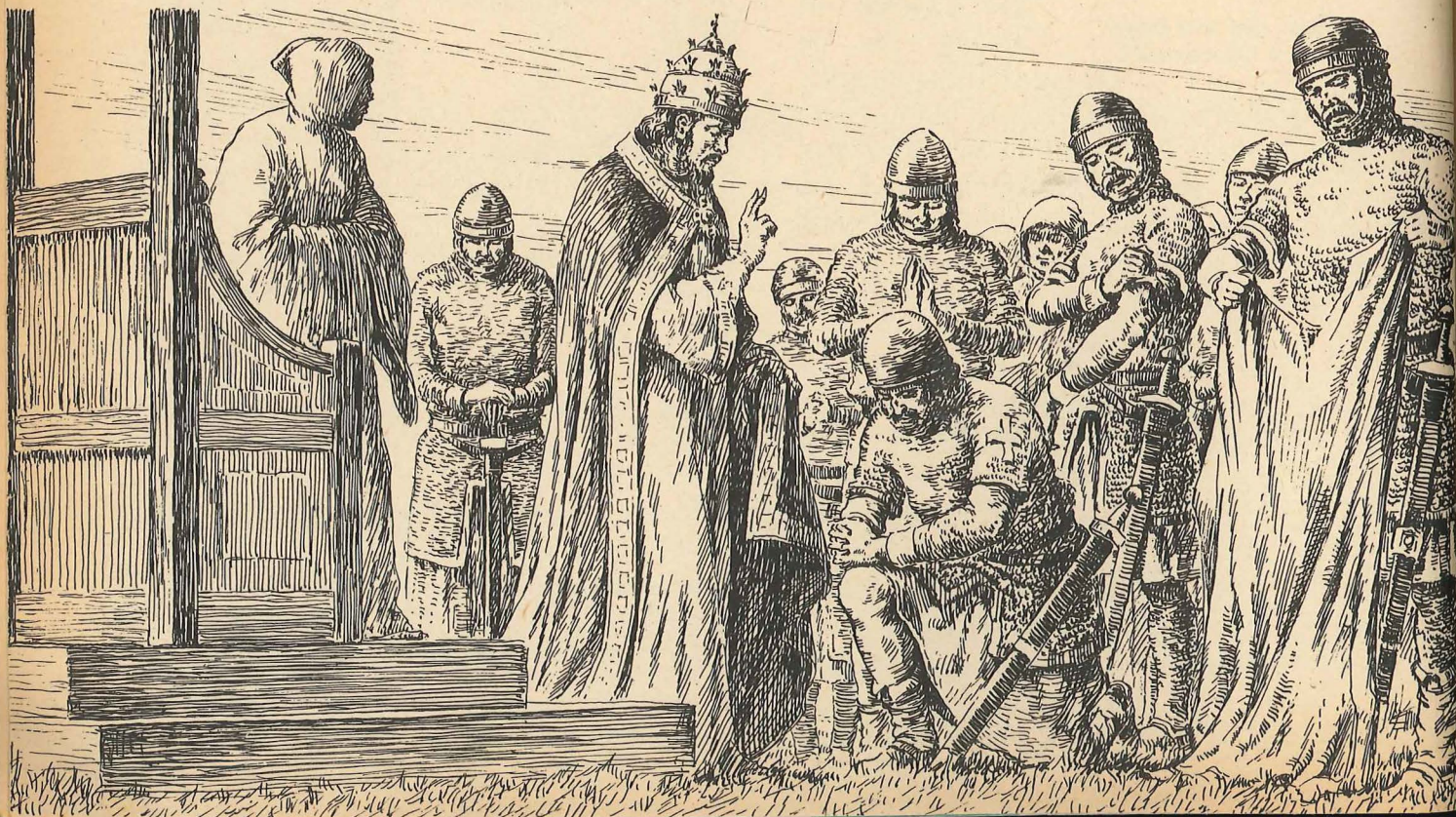
**What effect did Pope Urban's words have?**

audience. There was anger. There was sorrow. There was gloom. Some men were weeping, some had bowed their heads with grief.

Then, suddenly, someone shouted out: "God wills it! God wills this crusade!" Another man took up the cry, and then another and another until, in a few minutes, all doubts seemed to have been swept aside and the whole body of bishops and barons were shouting with one mighty voice: "God wills it! God wills it!" Some of them went even further and started tearing their cloaks into strips to make crosses, which they pinned on their sleeves.

Pope Urban stood up, tears of joy streaming down his cheeks. He raised his arms and pronounced a blessing on the gathering. "Yes, our crusade is indeed the will of God!" he cried. "Now, we must send messengers and envoys to all the towns and villages of Europe, and call upon the people to join us in the great holy enterprise!"

"God wills this crusade!"







Within the next months, Urban sent his envoys speeding on horseback over the rough roads of Europe,

spreading the message of the crusade. The papal messengers sped up to castles, and there gave the news to the nobles and barons and to their families and servants. Other horsemen went to the courts of kings, princes and bishops. Priests hurried from monastery to monastery to inform the abbots and their monks.

In the towns, town criers toured the streets, clanging their handbells and proclaiming the crusade in loud, booming voices. Wandering preachers, like Peter the Hermit, travelled from village to village whipping up enthusiasm with rousing, dramatic speeches.

Envoys spread the message throughout Europe. Both princes and peasants set out to drive the Muslims from the Holy Land.

In quite a short time, Urban's call for a crusade was sweeping through Europe like a fever. The whole continent, it seemed, was in a state of high excitement and enthusiasm.

Feudal princes formed a great crusading army in southern France. Raymond, Count of Toulouse raised another large force, and yet another gathered under the command of Bohemund of Otranto in the Norman duchy of Apulia, southern Italy. In northern France, Duke Robert of Normandy, son of William the Conqueror, pawned his duchy for £25,000 in order to "take the Cross", as going



on crusade was called. Other French lords who also took crusading vows were Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lower Lorraine, Stephen, Count of Blois and Hugh, Count of Vermandois.

These nobles and princes were, of course, the men whose profession was war. However, to everyone's amazement, it soon became clear that a great mass of illiterate, poverty-stricken peasants had also made up their minds to go on crusade.

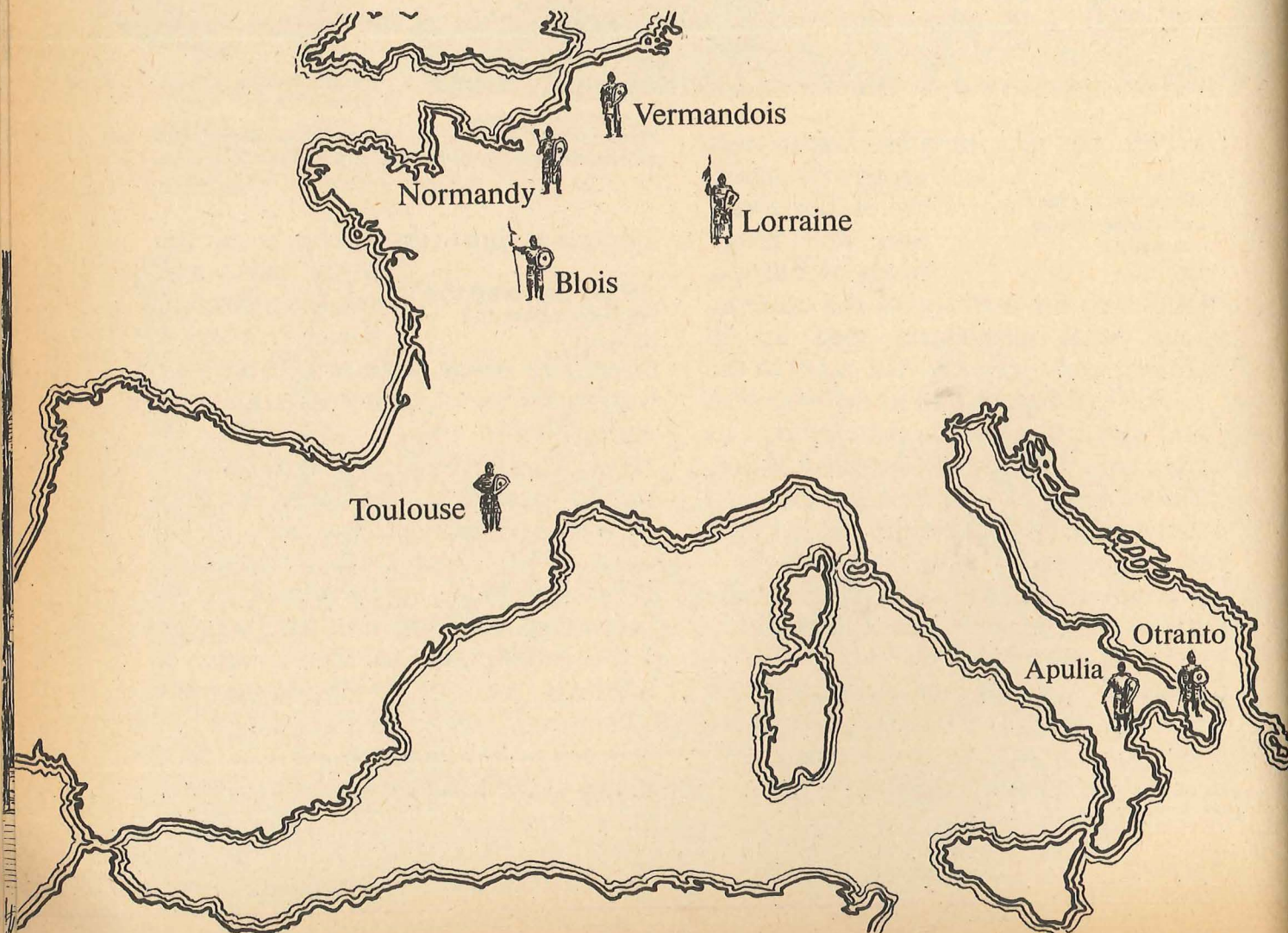
Churchmen thought that some miracle must have occurred to stir the peasants' dull, apathetic spirits. It is more likely, though, that some

**Why did the peasants want to be crusaders?**

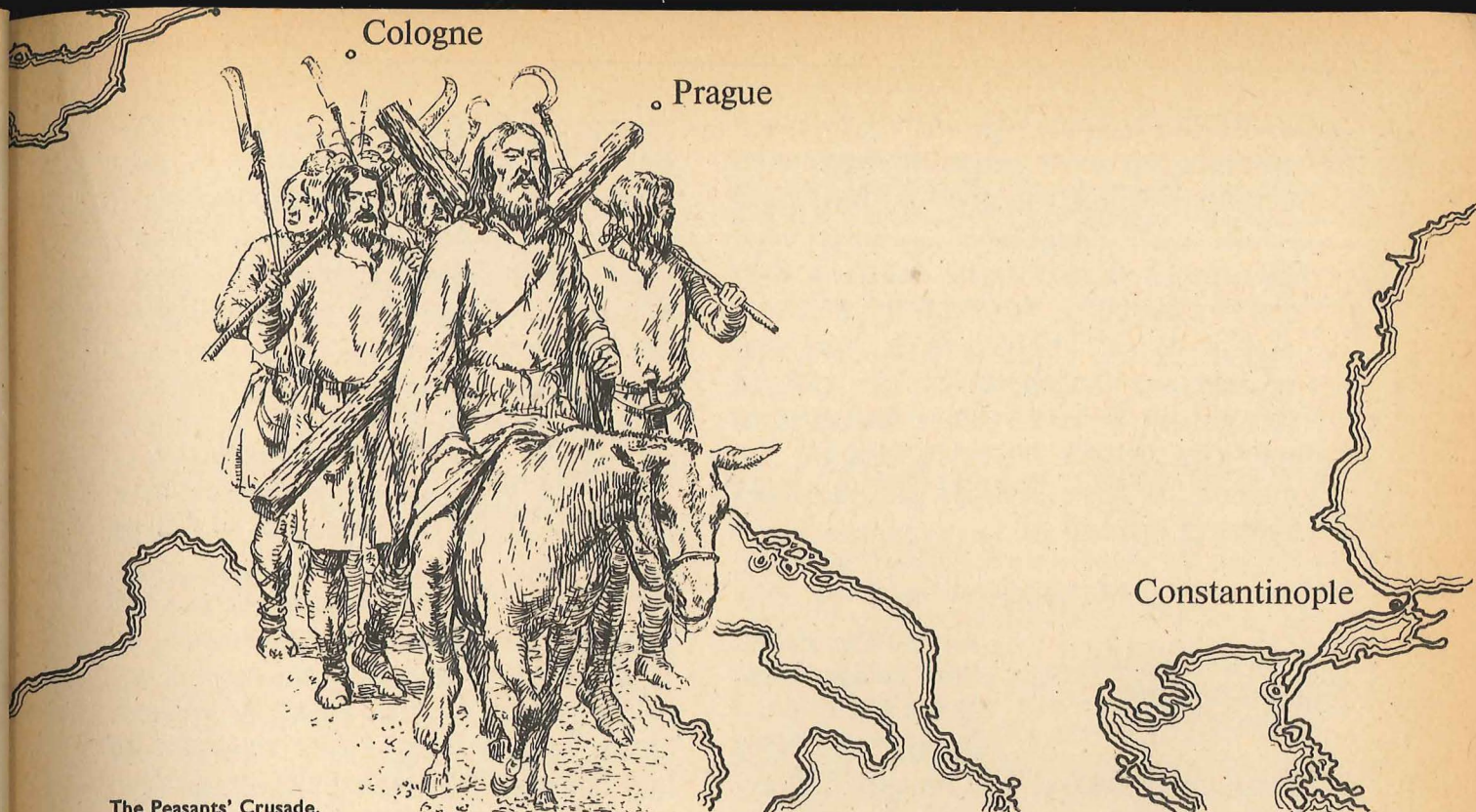
peasants were inspired by the desire to escape their hard lives as serfs to harsh feudal lords. Others hoped that in the Holy Land the promises of Jesus would come true. For had not Jesus forecast that the "meek shall inherit the Earth" and that the poor should be the first to enter the Kingdom of Heaven?

With such thoughts in mind, thousands of peasants all over Europe and from as far away as Scotland sold their meagre possessions, abandoned their homes and fields, and loaded their children onto ox-carts and horse-wagons. In the early spring of 1096 they set off eastwards, bound for the Holy Land which many of them believed to be the Kingdom of Heaven itself.

Princes from all over Europe gathered armies together.







The Peasants' Crusade.

Individual groups were headed by local knights or nobles, but the overall leader of most peasant crusaders was Peter the Hermit. Peter set out from Cologne, Germany, in May, 1096, intending to take his followers through the Rhineland and Hungary to Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire. At about the same time another great mass of peasants set out under another preacher, Walter the Penniless.

Neither Peter nor Walter had got very far, though, before they were made to realise that going on crusade was not the grand and glorious venture they had pictured. There was a very ugly and disturbing side to crusading, for while many peasants were sincere and devout, too many others were nothing better than greedy, murderous thugs. Because of them, the ideal of crusade soon became stained with savage, bloody deeds.

In the early summer of 1096, the great horde of peasants was choking the roads of the Rhineland with a huge, disorganised mass of wagons, pack animals and pedestrians. As they plodded the long weary kilometres from one town to the next, the peasants became more and more restless and unruly. Finally, violence broke out and before long the peasants were making wild attacks on villagers and townspeople. They looted shops and beat up their owners, broke into homes, wrecked furniture and furnishings, and stole everything they could lay their hands on.

In places like Worms or Prague, the people who suffered most were the Jews. They had long been an object of hatred among Christians and, as a result, lived in a constant state of uncertainty and suspense. When the peasant crusaders arrived, the Jews'



worst fears came true, for they faced annihilation from gangs of thugs with murder in mind. Numberless Jews were seized and slaughtered. Others were threatened with instant death if they did not agree to be instantly baptised as Christians. Thousands of Jews who refused were butchered on the spot. In this ghastly fashion, entire Jewish communities ceased to exist, despite the appeals of local bishops for the mass murders to stop.

The peasants behaved just as barbarously when they reached the Danube and began to move through Hungary. The Magyar inhabitants reacted to their violence, killing and looting by gathering their armed forces: thousands of peasants died in the pitched battles that ensued.

Those who escaped moved on into the territory of the Byzantine Empire, where their approach was heralded, ominously, by a plague of locusts.

**What happened in Hungary and Byzantium?**

The peasants proved a plague of another kind, for in Byzantium, too, they burned and killed and pillaged and created terror and havoc wherever they went. Even Peter the Hermit was unable to halt the atrocities committed by his followers.

The Byzantine Emperor, Alexius I

**What did the Byzantine Emperor do?**

Comnenus, was appalled to find a horde of savage barbarians converging on Constantinople.

When the peasants finally got there, in August 1096, Alexius' one thought was to get rid of them. Alexius gathered enough ships, and within five or six days he had transported his unwelcome visitors across the Bosphorus into lands occupied by the ferocious Turkish Muslims.

The Peasants' Crusade ended in violence, death, barbarity and total failure.



**FACT I**  
Odo of  
March 1  
sur-Mar  
monk in



When the peasants disembarked and dispersed in the region round  
**What happened to the peasants?**

**Nicomedia** (Izmit), they quickly fell victim to the Turks, who had no trouble in hunting them down and killing them. Peter the Hermit, unable to keep any sort of order or save his followers, quickly returned to Constantinople. Walter the Penniless remained behind and died, together with 300,000 peasants, in a battle with the Turks on October 21. Soon afterwards, Emperor Alexius took pity on the exhausted survivors and brought them back to Constantinople.

So the Peasants' Crusade, which had begun with such high hopes, ended in violence, death, barbarity and total failure.

**FACT BOX: POPE URBAN II (c. 1042–1099)**

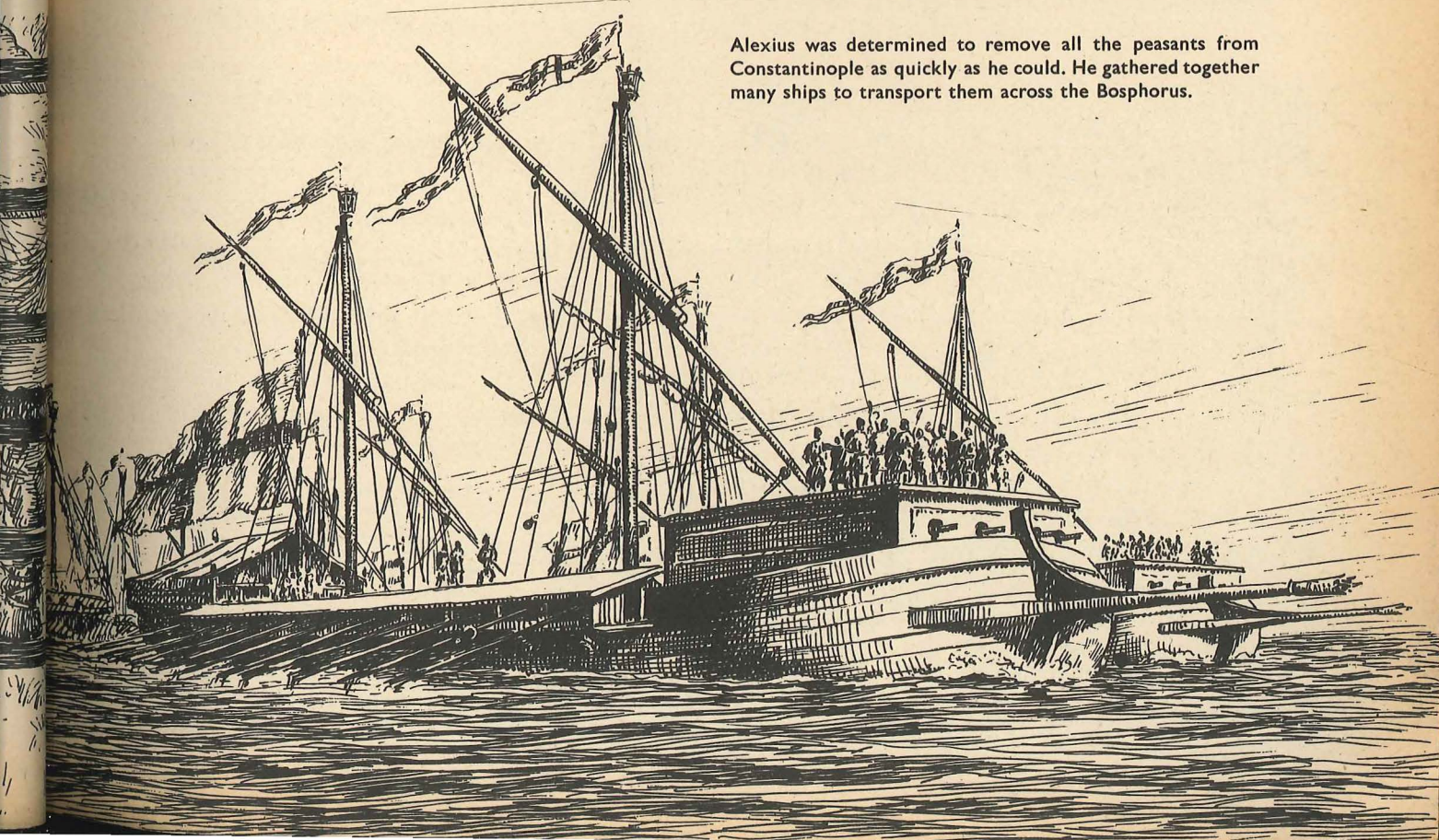
Odo of Lagery, who was elected Pope as Urban II on March 12, 1088, was born in about 1042 in Chatillon-sur-Marne, France. In about 1070, Odo became a monk in the famous Benedictine abbey of Cluny, which

was renowned for its humanitarianism and well-disciplined ways. In 1078, he was created a cardinal and ten years later, on becoming pope, one of Odo's first acts was to try to heal the long-standing quarrel with the Christian Emperors of Byzantium. Pope Urban's call for a crusade in 1095 was partly intended to help this healing process. Urban wanted the crusaders to help the Byzantines drive the Turks out of their territory in Asia Minor. Urban died on July 29, 1099, two weeks to the day after the armies of the First Crusade captured Jerusalem.

**FACT BOX: PETER THE HERMIT (DIED 1115)**

Peter the Hermit, who was probably born in Amiens, France, was only one of many wandering preachers who spread the message of the crusade, but he was certainly among the most skilful. Peter appears to have been a great orator, with all an orator's power to grip the attention and emotions of his audiences. In about 1093, Peter had been a pilgrim to Jerusalem and knew how terrifying it was to be set upon and attacked by Muslim bandits, and to be robbed and beaten up by them. Many of those who heard him, or who met him on the road were convinced that Peter was a saint. White-bearded and white-haired, Peter travelled the roads on his donkey wearing a woollen tunic and cloak, but no shoes, and carrying a heavy wooden cross strapped to his back. After the disaster of the Peasants' Crusade, Peter accompanied the crusading knights to Palestine and preached a sermon on the mount of Olives a week before the capture of Jerusalem. In 1100, Peter returned home to Europe and became Prior of Neufmoustier at Liège, where he died on July 8, 1115.

Alexius was determined to remove all the peasants from Constantinople as quickly as he could. He gathered together many ships to transport them across the Bosphorus.







The crusaders had never seen anything as splendid or as beautiful as the city of Constantinople.

## The Knights' Crusade

In the meantime, the strong, well-disciplined armies of the Frankish and Norman princes had begun to move across Europe. The great armed hosts rode and marched in ordered ranks through towns and villages, armour shining in the sun, pennons flying and the fiery red cross of the crusader emblazoned on their breasts. They presented a splendid sight and attracted many local chiefs to join them, together with their own small bands of soldiers. Pilgrims and priests also joined in, and so the bands of knightly crusaders swelled to greater and greater numbers.

The crusaders arrived at Constantinople in separate groups, but by May 1097 the last of them had reached the Byzantine capital. Its size and magnificence made a dazzling impression on them. Europe had no city like it. The crusaders goggled at the great paved roads, superb gold-roofed palaces and churches and at the beautiful statues decorating the streets and squares.

Emperor Alexius, who was still shaken by the savagery of the peasant crusaders, was very suspicious of them.

**What did the crusaders think of Constantinople?**



He was afraid that the splendour of Constantinople would drive the crusader armies to start pillaging and looting. Apart from this, the presence of a large foreign army, some 80,000 strong, whose leaders were not particularly friendly towards the Byzantines, was in itself a threat. Some of the crusader leaders, like Bohemund of Otranto, had already made war on the Byzantines in Italy, and had led armed invasions of Byzantine lands in Albania and Greece.

**Why was Alexius suspicious?**

The wary Alexius therefore tried to safeguard himself. He demanded that all crusader commanders swear an oath of loyalty to him, and promise to return to the Empire any former Byzantine lands they captured from the Muslims. Some crusaders were reluctant, but with the help of bribes and threats Alexius managed to persuade them to do as he asked. Nevertheless, a few, like Bohemund of Otranto, had no intention of keeping their word.

**What precautions did Alexius take?**

Alexius provided the crusaders with money, supplies, transport ships and guides to take them through the unknown terrain that lay across the Bosphorus in Asia Minor. So, in mid-summer 1097, the Christian hosts, who had travelled hundreds of kilometres from their homelands to fight for Christ, reached enemy territory and prepared to do battle with the Muslims.

**How did Alexius help the crusaders?**

At first, it seemed the crusaders were going to score a fairly easy success. In June, 1097, they forced the city of Nicaea to surrender after a short siege, and on June 29 they inflicted a serious defeat on the Turks at the pass of Dorylaeum (near Eskisehir). With that, all organised Turkish resistance in Asia Minor came to an end.

**What were the crusaders' early successes?**

Alexius made the crusader commanders swear an oath of loyalty to him, but some of them had already made treacherous plans.





Alexius was naturally well pleased and moved in with his own forces to reoccupy Byzantine lands which had been liberated from the Turks.

The Christian armies, including a small contingent of Byzantines, moved on, slowly but steadily making their way southwards. They suffered from lightning guerrilla attacks by bands of mounted Turkish archers, who would appear unexpectedly, loose a shower of arrows at them and gallop away. But their progress was not seriously affected, and they continued on towards the towering peaks of the Taurus Mountains.

Now, the going became very hard and exhausting. Asia

**What difficulties did the crusaders encounter?**

Minor was oven-hot, with simmering temperatures

more intense than anything experienced in Europe. The heavily-armoured crusaders became exhausted after long days of travelling over dry, sun-baked terrain. Their horses' hooves and flurries of wind blowing across their path raised clouds of dust that stung their eyes and parched their throats. The Byzantines had been generous in their gifts of food and supplies, but these

soon ran out. The crusaders were forced to struggle on with hunger rumbling in their stomachs and their throats dried out and tongues swollen from lack of sufficient water. The only way they could relieve their thirst was by chewing the branches of thorn bushes. Some crusaders, according to a contemporary chronicler, "marched with their mouths open, hoping to cool their parched throats by even the slightest breath of air."

Despite their sufferings, though, the

**How was the first crusader state created?**

crusaders responded readily when they received an appeal

from Armenian Christians in and around the city of Edessa for help in freeing them from Turkish oppression. At Marash, on the southern slopes of the Taurus Mountains, one crusader leader, Baldwin of Boulogne, left the main army and marched to their aid.

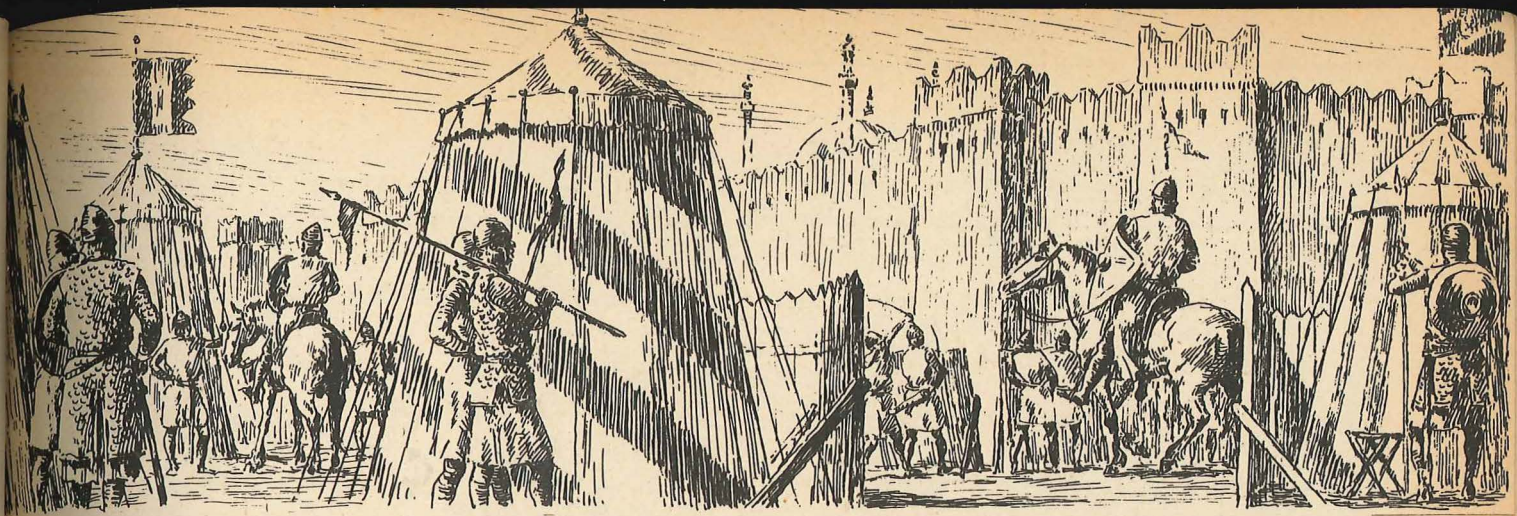
Baldwin quickly liberated Edessa and drove the Turks away. The Armenians were delighted and their prince, Thoros, adopted Baldwin as his son. Delight soon turned to alarm, though, when the unscrupulous Baldwin began to plot against his adoptive father. After the unfortunate Thoros was murdered, Baldwin took over, made himself master of Edessa and set up the first crusader state there.

This piece of treachery was the first of many that would occur during the crusades. It set an unsavoury example, for Baldwin's action at Edessa fired the equally ambitious Bohemund of Otranto to copy him. The place Bohemund picked for his own crusader state was Antioch, in northern Syria.

The crusaders soon found that they had to fight for survival against heat, thirst and starvation.







The crusader armies reached Antioch in October, 1097,

**How did Bohemund plot against Alexius?**

after slogging their way over the narrow, dangerous passes of the Taurus Mountains. Antioch, which the Turks had captured in 1085, rightfully belonged to the Byzantine Empire. Bohemund, however, had no intention of handing it back to Emperor Alexius, who was still occupied with retrieving his former territories in Asia Minor.

With the crusader armies camped before the walls of Antioch, Bohemund used Alexius' absence as proof that the Emperor meant to betray them. By planting this damaging idea in the minds of other crusader leaders, Bohemund got most of them to agree that whoever captured Antioch should rule the city as his own.

The one leader to disagree, and insist on sticking by his oath to Alexius, was Raymond of Toulouse. Raymond watched Bohemund closely as the siege of Antioch dragged on into the early months of 1098 believing, quite rightly, that Bohemund was planning some treachery.

Despite Raymond's suspicious eyes,

**How was Antioch captured?**

Bohemund secretly arranged with Firuz, one of the Muslim commanders inside Antioch, that he would help the cru-

Bohemund was determined that Antioch was going to be his city.

saders take the city. This betrayal took place just in time. When the crusaders finally entered Antioch and overwhelmed its Turkish defenders, a relief army under Kerbogha, Atabeg (Regent) of Mosul, was only two days away. Kerbogha arrived on June 5, to find the crusaders in control, but in a very weak state. They were suffering from starvation and from the terrible hardships of the long siege. Thousands had died in Antioch during that siege, and with piles of bodies lying in the streets, the crusaders also faced the perils of disease.

Kerbogha laid siege to Antioch, confi-

**How was Kerbogha defeated?**

dent that it was only a matter of time before the crusaders surrendered: only a divine miracle could possibly save them. To Kerbogha's fury—and the delight of Bohemund, who held most of Antioch—a miracle happened. A French priest dreamed that the Holy Lance, which, it was believed, had once pierced the body of Jesus Christ, was hidden somewhere in the city. The Lance was found, and with this new assurance of God's support to raise their spirits, the crusaders swarmed out of Antioch on June 28 and thrashed Kerbogha's army. It was a great victory, for as a result of it Kerbogha's forces disbanded and fled.





Most crusaders now longed to press on to Jerusalem, kilometres away to the south, but, Bohemund and Raymond of Toulouse had other ideas. They were not at all anxious to leave Antioch. For months, they quarrelled violently over their rival claims to the city. Bohemund maintained it was his because he had played the major part in capturing it. Raymond insisted that Emperor Alexius should have it.

After five months of this wrangling, the ordinary soldiers, priests and pilgrims, who had not lost sight of the purpose of their crusade, decided they had had enough. To the astonishment of their leaders, they issued an ultimatum: either the march to Jerusalem


In 1099 the crusaders created the new Christian Bishopric of St. George.

began immediately, or they would burn down Antioch and demolish its walls.

The shock of this threat made the squabbling leaders see sense. They took a solemn oath to "remember Jerusalem" and publicly repented for the sins of greed and pride they had committed. Privately, though, the wily Bohemund was still plotting to get hold of Antioch.

At long last, in November, 1098, the crusaders began to move towards Jerusalem. It was not a difficult progress, for local resistance by the Turks was





weak, and in their eagerness to reach the Holy City the crusaders left untouched several cities and castles that lay along their route. By Christmas, the crusaders were well on their way towards the sacred soil of Palestine and it was, naturally, a very special and solemn Christmas in their eyes.

Just after they had celebrated the festival, Bohemund put his private plan into operation. Before Raymond could stop him, he turned back, and raced to Antioch. Bohemund seized the city and overcame the guards Raymond had left there. In January, 1099, after fourteen months of plotting and argument, Bohemund achieved his great ambition and founded the second crusader state in Antioch.

Meanwhile, the crusaders' advance on Jerusalem continued, and when the spring of 1099 came they reached the Holy Land. When they arrived at Lydda, a solemn ceremony took place in which the crusaders created the new Christian Bishopric of St. George.

An even more exciting and emotional experience awaited them the day after they moved on from Lydda, for they were now very close to Bethlehem, birth-place of Christ.

When the Christians in Bethlehem saw one hundred crusader knights approaching the town in the pale light of dawn, they snatched up crosses and banners and rushed out to greet them, tears of joy streaming down their faces. Singing hymns and proclaiming blessings, they led the knights to the basilica of the Virgin Mary, where the crusaders knelt and offered heartfelt prayers.

Then the knights left to join the rest of the army, which was now approaching Jerusalem through the Mountains of Judea.

On June 7, 1099, some 13,000 crusaders climbed to the top of a hill overlooking Jerusalem. Wonderstruck and deeply moved, the crusaders scanned the panorama of Jerusalem's flat-roofed houses and shining domes. There was the Church of the Resurrection, with its roof sparkling in the brilliant summer sunlight. There were the great round roofs of the bazaars. Here and there, dotted among the other buildings, were the tall, elegant minarets from which the Muslims were called to prayer each day. And there, in the distance, silhouetted against the skyline, was the Mount of Olives, where Jesus had often gone to pray.

Confronted with a scene that, to them, was a dream come true, the crusaders wept with emotion and knelt in prayer to offer thanks to God for bringing them safely through so many dangers. The hill on which they knelt was blessed and formally baptised as "Montjoie", or Hill of Joy.

However, the magnificent view of Jerusalem, as seen from the Hill of Joy, also showed the crusaders that wresting the city from its Muslim and Jewish defenders was not going to be easy. Jerusalem was built on top of a hill, 2,500 feet (762 metres) high, and except on the north side was surrounded by very deep ravines. From a military viewpoint, this is the most difficult sort of place to capture.

**What was Bohemund's private plan?**

**What was Jerusalem like?**

**What happened at Bethlehem?**

**Why was Jerusalem difficult to capture?**



The siege of Jerusalem began within hours of the crusaders' arrival and in the five weeks it lasted it

**What happened at the siege of Jerusalem?**

proved to be a vicious and exhausting struggle. Again and again, the crusaders approached and attacked the city walls, only to have their scaling ladders hacked down by the defenders. Scores of knights were killed as the ladders crashed down to the ground. Scores more, who managed to get over the walls, were slaughtered by groups of defenders lying in wait for them with swords and daggers.

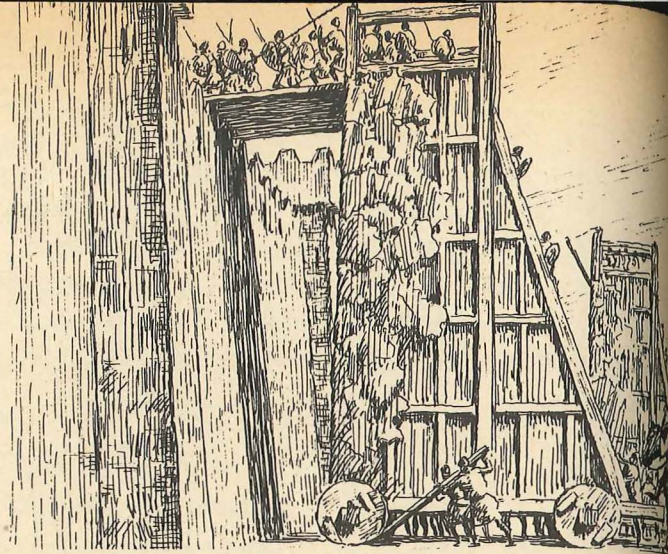
As the weeks passed and Jerusalem continued to hold out, desperation seized many of the crusaders. Time and again, they walked in procession round the city walls, calling on God to make the walls fall like those of Jericho in the Old Testament. Others prayed and fasted and did penitence, but still the city failed to fall.

Then, it was decided to use siege machines.

**How was Jerusalem captured?**

Raymond of Toulouse and Godfrey of Bouillon took several weeks to build the great wooden castles on wheels which the crusaders needed, but at last, in mid-July, they were ready. On July 15, in the sizzling heat of noon, Godfrey's tower was wheeled towards the north wall of Jerusalem. Amid a thick shower of arrows and spears flung at them by the defenders, the crusaders lowered a bridge from the top of the machine onto the battlements. As crusader soldiers surged over the bridge and into the city, the defenders fled towards the city centre.

Soon, Jerusalem was the scene of frightful battles, with crusaders swarming through the narrow streets killing every Muslim and Jew they could find.



The Crusaders used great siege machines to get into Jerusalem.

The toll of dead was appalling, for the crusaders butchered women and children as well as men.

The massacres went on for three whole days. By the time the crusaders gathered in the Church of the Resurrection to give thanks to God for victory, Jerusalem was a horribly silent city, littered with bodies, stained with blood and choked with the smoke of burning houses, mosques and synagogues.

Nevertheless, it was now a Christian city, after four centuries of Muslim rule, and the great crusade Pope Urban had preached had achieved its most important purpose.

#### **FACT BOX: BOHEMUND I OF ANTIOCH (c. 1057–1111)**

Bohemund's treacherous seizure of Antioch, in January 1099, brought him no joy or pleasure, because he was faced with two extremely powerful adversaries. One was Emperor Alexius, whom Bohemund had betrayed. The other was the strong force of Muslims in north-east Syria. Between these two enemies, Bohemund was crushed.

In 1100, he was captured by the Muslims and remained imprisoned for three years, until he was ransomed by an Armenian prince. A year later, in 1104, Bohemund was badly beaten by the Muslims in a battle at Rakka on the River Euphrates. After this, Bohemund returned to Europe, where he spread slanderous stories about Emperor Alexius and began to organise a crusade against him. This venture failed, too. Alexius defeated Bohemund in 1108 at the Devoll River, and forced him to submit to him as his vassal. Bohemund died three years later, in Italy.



# The Crusader States in Palestine

When news of the capture of Jerusalem spread through

**How was the news of victory received?**

Europe, there were wild celebrations. People danced and feasted in the streets. The merrymaking went on for days at a time. Churches all over the continent were crowded with people expressing in prayer and thanksgiving their joy and gratitude at the wonderful achievement of the crusaders.

In this mood of wild delight, most Christians failed to realise that the crusaders' success was largely due to disunity among the Muslims. A people as divided and quarrelsome as the Turks were in Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine did not make good defenders, and this had a lot to do with the relative ease with which the First Crusade had accomplished its aims.

The Turks were embittered by what had happened,

**How did the crusaders consolidate their victory?**

but they were helpless to stop the crusaders

strengthening their hold on the lands and cities they had won.

In the twelve years after the fall of Jerusalem, the crusaders captured the entire Mediterranean coastline of Syria, Lebanon and Palestine and moved inland to overrun Judea, Samaria, Galilee and a good deal of land across the Jordan River. By 1111, the Muslims, whom the crusaders called "Saracens", retained only Tyre and Ascalon. Tyre fell to the Christians in 1123, and Ascalon in 1154.

The crusaders made great advances after the fall of Jerusalem.



AREAS CONQUERED BY  
THE CRUSADERS 1101-1118





After Godfrey's death, Baldwin had himself crowned King of Jerusalem.

The Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem, which the First Crusade created, extended from Beirut in the

**How extensive were the crusaders' conquests?**

north to Aqaba in the south, with a line of strong fortifications and castles guarding the 250-mile (402.3 kms.) eastern frontier which ran through desert country. North of the Kingdom lay the crusader Countship of Tripoli, Bohemund's Princedom of Antioch and Baldwin's Countship of Edessa. With these four territories, the crusaders had carved a slice out of the Muslim Turkish Empire that was some 500 miles (804.6 kms.) long. Over the next few years, until the mid-12th century, Muslim forces made many attacks on the Christians' lands. Many of these onslaughts were made with considerable strength and determination, and the crusaders often had to fight hard to avert defeat. Despite this, though, the Muslims scored no great success and they had to face the fact that the hated Christians and their states had come to stay, at least for the foreseeable future.

Many of the lords and knights who had taken part in the crusade returned home soon after it was

**Who were the "peacetime" crusaders?**

over, having fulfilled the promises they made to Pope Urban when they vowed to take the Cross. There were hundreds of others, though, who wanted to replace them and share in the glory that soon surrounded the whole idea of going to live in the Holy Land.

As well as fresh soldiers and knights, the crusader states also received a constant flow of pilgrims. Many craftsmen and artisans also came, to set up business in the towns. These people were encouraged by the Church to regard themselves as "peacetime" crusaders, who were supporting and working for the states the crusading princes, knights and soldiers had created by war.

The first crusader ruler of Jerusalem was Godfrey of Bouillon, who had played the main part in the

**How were the crusader states organised?**

capture of the city. Unfortunately, Godfrey, brother of Baldwin, crusader



Count of Edessa, died after little more than a year, in July 1100. When he heard the news, the ever-ambitious Baldwin, accompanied by 200 knights and 700 soldiers, hurried down from Edessa to take his brother's place. Baldwin was crowned king of Jerusalem on Christmas Day, in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

Like the feudal lords they were, Godfrey and Baldwin both shared out lands among their followers who, in return, did homage to them as their vassals and promised to provide them with soldiers in the event of war. This was, of course, the same system by which feudal lords ruled in Europe at that time. The only difference was that in the Holy Land the serfs who worked the vassals' lands were the Muslims, Druses and others who were natives of the country.

The crusaders also set up their own courts of law, again on feudal European lines. In addition, they turned Jerusalem into a Christian city and forbade Jews and Muslims, whom they considered "infidels", to live there. Muslim mosques and Jewish synagogues were all converted into churches, and the niche in the southern wall of Jerusalem, where the Muslims had turned towards Mecca to pray, was covered in.

Muslim mosques and Jewish synagogues were all converted into churches.

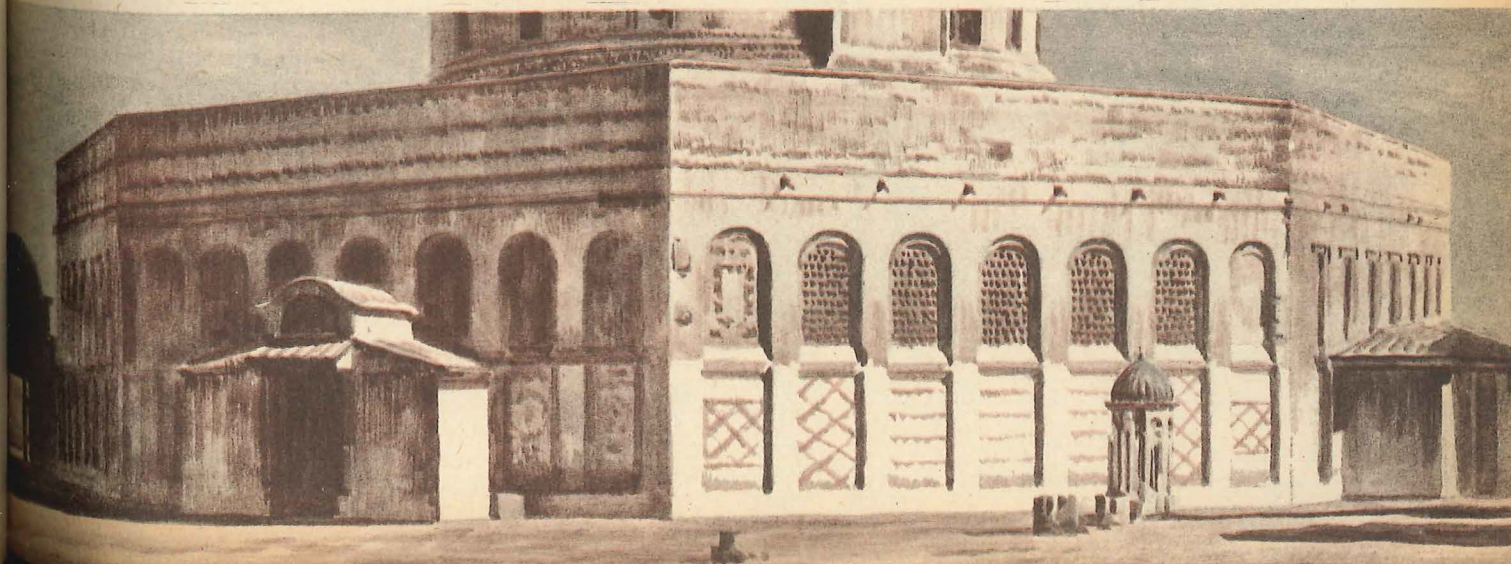
With government, law and religion, the crusaders simply transplanted to the Holy Land the way of life

and the customs they knew at home in Europe. Even so, they could not transform everything because at no time were they anything more than a tiny minority among a large indigenous population.

Of this population, the Muslims and Jews were far more cultured than the crusaders themselves, with an impressive history of scholarship and philosophy. Muslim knights, whose courage could not be disputed, were often learned scholars, while Christian knights were usually illiterate: they thought reading and writing were useless for fighting men like themselves, and left such things to monks and churchmen.

In this situation, Christians who had come to Palestine with a rather superior attitude towards the natives soon found they were outclassed and placed in the awkward position of ruling over people cleverer than themselves.

Add to this the fact that, as in all countries, life in Palestine was influenced greatly by climate and geography, and you will see why, after a few years, the crusaders began to copy native customs and take advantage of native talents.





At home, the crusaders dressed in the loose robes, turbans and open sandals which

**What did the crusaders wear?**

Palestinians had long ago found most comfortable for the very hot climate. The burning sun could make the metal of a knight's armour too hot to touch, so crusader knights copied the Muslim custom of covering it with a linen surcoat.

The crusaders' wives and daughters soon began to protect their delicate European complexions from the sun by wearing veils over their faces, just as Muslim women did. They also became very fond of making themselves smell sweet by using the sultry Arabian perfumes, and beautified themselves by powdering their faces and daubing their lips and cheeks with red ochre.

The crusaders adopted some of the Muslim clothes.



The crusaders enjoyed watching the Muslim women dance.

Using cosmetics was very much frowned on in Europe as it encouraged vanity.

**What was Muslim food like?**

Bathing, too, was neither popular nor encouraged there, but in Palestine the crusaders adopted the Muslim custom of washing frequently. They also acquired a taste for exotic Muslim food, which was deliciously spiced with pepper, ginger and cloves. There were superb wines to drink, and there was also a marvellous delicacy of mixed fruit juices called sherbet, which the Muslims made ice-cold by packing it in mountain snow. As if all this was not enough, the Holy Land also offered wonderful fruits rarely seen in Europe, such as apricots, melons, oranges and lemons.

As for entertainments, the crusaders brought to the Holy Land the hunting, hawking and jousting that

**How did the crusaders entertain themselves?**

were the usual pleasures of European knights. They played chess, draughts and dice just as they had done at home. To these enjoyments they added recitals of Muslim music and displays of dancing by veiled Muslim women.



One of the features of the Holy Land for which the crusaders were most grateful was the skill of

**Why did the crusaders favour Muslim doctors?**

Muslim doctors. Many European doctors were little better than crude butchers. They chopped off gangrenous legs with axes, rubbed salt in wounds, and cut deep crosses in the skulls of patients suffering from tuberculosis or fever in order to drive out the "devils" supposed to be possessing them. Understandably, many of their patients died as a result.

Muslim doctors were far less drastic. They cured diseases with drugs like camphor, myrrh, senna and musk. They applied poultices to abscesses and prescribed curative diets for stomach troubles and other ailments.

Many crusaders, faced with the strange, virulent diseases of the Holy Land, had good cause to bless the Muslim doctors who understood the

illnesses of the country and often saved the lives of Christian children.

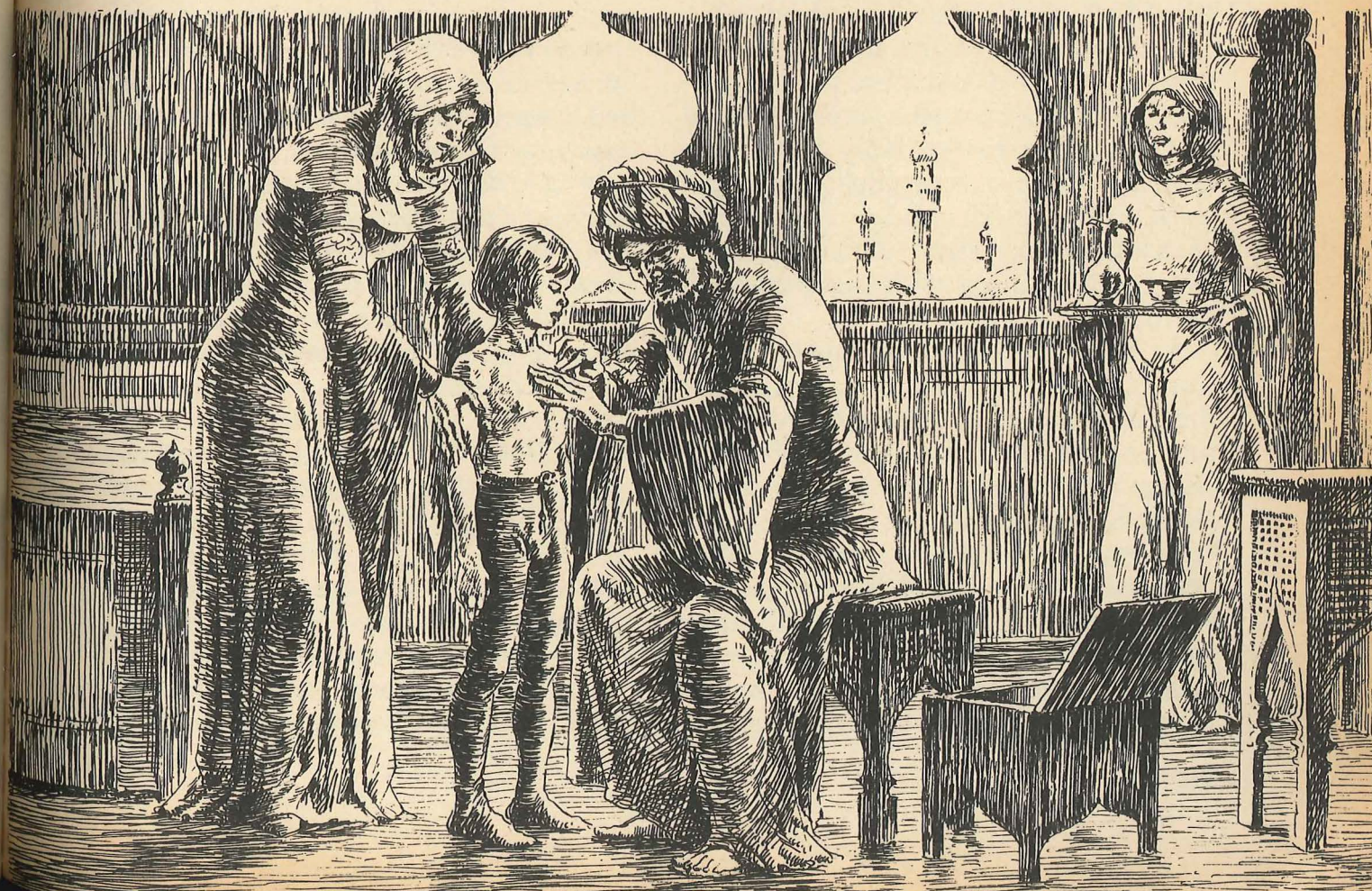
Pilgrims, new immigrants and visitors from Europe who came to the crusader states

**What did visitors from Europe think?**

with strict, puritanical ideas were appalled to discover that Christians already living there were often no different from the Muslims. They were even more shocked to find that the crusaders were quite friendly with these deadly enemies of their faith, hunted and feasted with them and sometimes married into Muslim families. All this was thought thoroughly reprehensible.

As one traveller, James of Vitry, scornfully put it: the crusaders "were brought up in luxury, soft and effeminate, more used to baths than battles . . . clad like women in soft robes."

Muslim doctors were very skilled. They saved the lives of many crusaders and their families.







Europeans had been taught that this was very sinful and pilgrims frequently returned home to tell terrible, scandalous tales about the crusaders, and to accuse them of betraying the holy cause of Christ. James of Vitry, for instance, was certain that crusaders' wives were learning witchcraft from the Muslim women. As stories like this passed from person to person, the gossip grew more and more pernicious. Soon, people in Europe began to believe that crusaders in the Holy Land did nothing but give enormous banquets, wash all day long, indulge in immoral entertainments, like dancing, and smother themselves with make-up and perfume.

As was usual in those superstitious times, fearsome predictions were made that God would wreak fearful revenge on the crusaders for their misdeeds. These frightening forecasts drew strength and conviction from the fact that, by the mid-12th century, the defences of the crusader kingdoms were weakening and the Muslim armies, which had never ceased to attack them, were scoring more victories than before.

An important reason for this new and worrying situation was that, more and more as the years went by, the disunity and quarrelling that had formerly weakened the Muslims was being replaced by an increasing resolve to join forces against the crusaders. With this, of course, the advantage of a divided enemy, which had helped the First Crusade to succeed, was fading away.

In addition, the crusaders faced a new and dangerous development. This was the revival of a very old tenet of Islam, the Muslim religion—"Jihad", or Holy War, which meant much the same thing to Muslims as crusading did to Christians.

The peril all this posed for the crusader states in Palestine was painfully demonstrated in 1144, when the vigorous talented Atabeg of Mosul, Zengi, captured Edessa, the first crusader colony.

The fall of Edessa was a terrible shock for the Christians. The shock





was even greater, though, when the rescue operation—the Second Crusade, called by Pope Eugenius III and led by King Louis VII of France and the German king, Conrad III—turned out to be a dismal failure (see Fact Box: The Second Crusade).

Worse was to come, for after Zengi died in 1146, his son Nureddin and one of Nureddin's most brilliant generals, Saladin, took over his work. Like Zengi, Nureddin and Saladin roused enthusiasm for the Holy War and unified Muslims in Syria, Palestine and Egypt for the common purpose of driving out the crusaders.

After Nureddin died in 1174, Saladin took sole command and worked cunningly to undermine the crusaders' position. He exploited the strong animosity between the Byzantines and the crusaders in the Holy Land. He made sure that rich Italian cities like Venice would not ship supplies and men to the crusaders, by offering them tempting trading treaties with Egypt.

Saladin was greatly helped by the crusaders themselves, because after

Saladin united the Muslims of Syria, Palestine and Egypt in their Holy War against the crusaders.

1186, when Baldwin V, child king of Jerusalem died, a struggle for the throne began between rival groups. The struggle was so violent that it seemed civil war was imminent.

While the crusaders squabbled, Saladin and his powerful army of 80,000 men were sweeping through Palestine. In May, 1187, Saladin crossed the Jordan river, defeated 20,000 crusaders at Hattin in Galilee on July 4, and marched towards Jerusalem virtually unchallenged, conquering castles and cities as he went. The worst blow of all fell on October 2, the day Saladin overran Jerusalem.

The Christian knights in the city fought back fiercely as Saladin's soldiers, using a siege machine, poured over the walls, but they were doomed from the start, for the Muslims were strong, determined and cunning.



Ibn-Al-athir, a Muslim who was present at the siege, described how some of Saladin's soldiers "approached the moat . . . and made a breach. Archers posted nearby repulsed the Christians on top of the ramparts with shots from their arrows, and so protected the workers. At the same time, they dug a subterranean passage and . . . filled it with wood, which they then only had to set alight. In this plight, the leaders of the Christians thought it best to capitulate."

Although Saladin treated the Christians

**What happened after Jerusalem fell?**

mercifully after the surrender of Jerusalem, this did little to lessen the tide of grief and fury that swept Europe when the ghastly news became known. Christians wept in the streets and tore their hair and clothes. Some were so affected by the news that they ran about screaming and cursing God for allowing such a terrible catastrophe to occur.

Soon, a great cry went up for another crusade, the third, to rescue Jerusalem and avenge the insults perpetrated by Saladin's men. The most painful of these insults occurred when the Muslims tore down the great cross

placed on the Holy Sepulchre, and trampled and spat upon it.

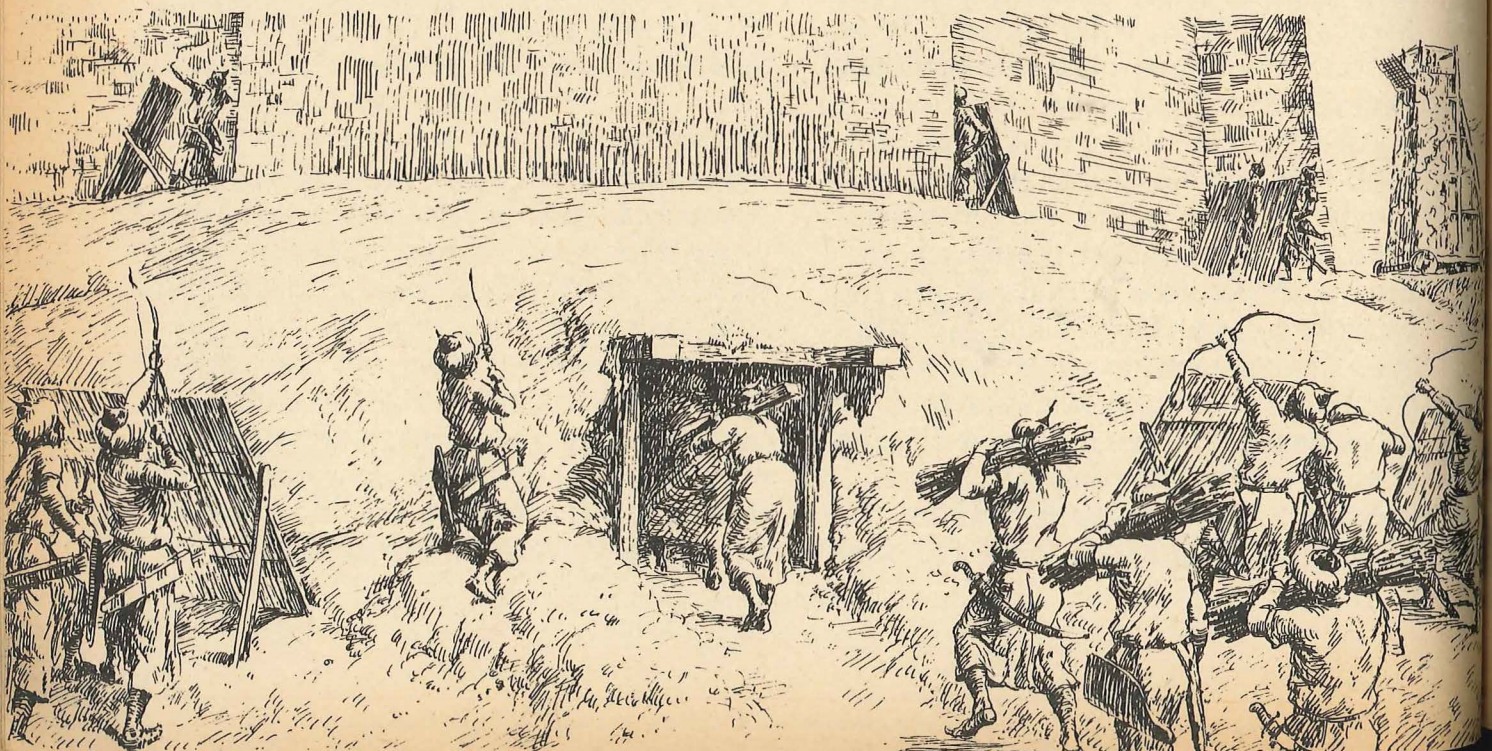
The Third Crusade was preached first by Pope Gregory VIII, and then by Pope Clement III. Knights and fighting men all over Europe, even from as far away as Viking Scandinavia, responded to the call. Among them were the three greatest monarchs in Europe—King Frederick I Barbarossa (red-beard) of Germany, King Philip II Augustus of France and England's soldier-king, Richard Lionheart.

#### **FACT BOX: GODFREY OF BOUILLON (c. 1060–1100)**

Unlike many of the Frankish princes who led the First Crusade, Godfrey of Bouillon was both pious and sincere. In fact, when Bohemund and Raymond were quarrelling over the possession of Antioch in 1098, it was Godfrey who led the opposition of ordinary crusaders against them.

Later, when Jerusalem fell, Godfrey and his soldiers were the first to enter the city. On July 22, 1099, Godfrey was elected ruler of Jerusalem, but he refused to take the title of "king": it is said that he refused to wear a crown of gold in the place where Jesus Christ had worn a crown of thorns. Instead, Godfrey became Defender of the Holy Sepulchre. After his death a year later, Godfrey was made into a legendary hero of the First Crusade and was depicted as such in two of the *Chansons de Geste* (see part VII)—The *Chanson d'Antioche* and the *Chanson de Jerusalem*.

Saladin recaptured Jerusalem.



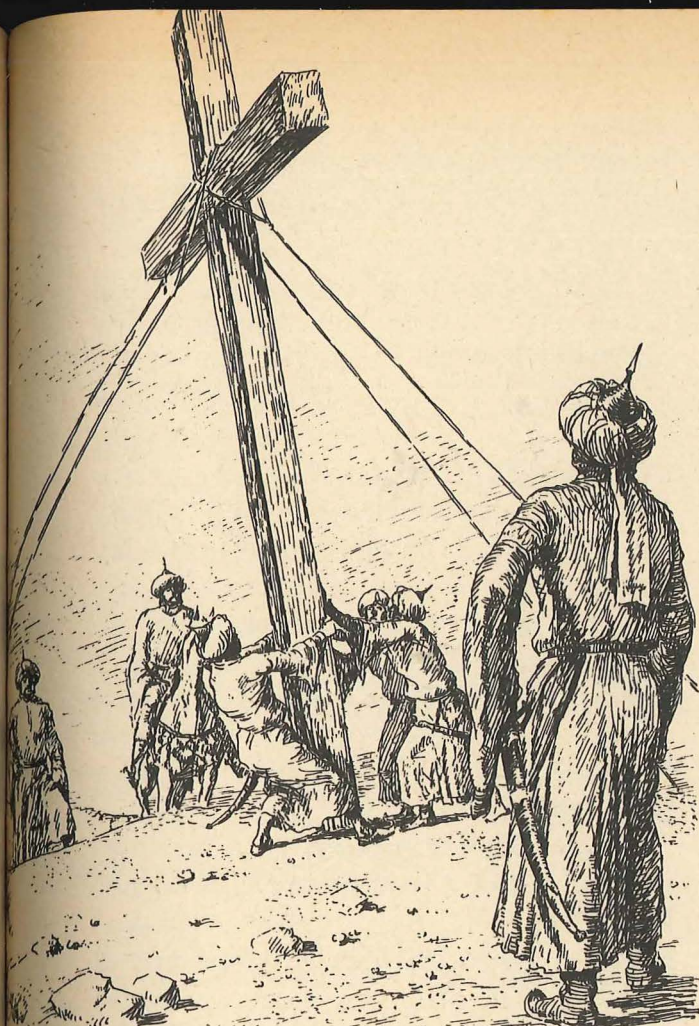
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The Muslims tore down the great cross on the Holy Sepulchre and trampled on it.

#### FACT BOX: THE SECOND CRUSADE OF 1147–1148

The Second Crusade, which was led by King Louis VII of France and King Conrad III of Germany, was a shameful and grossly mismanaged affair. It was nothing like the glorious venture of rescue envisaged by the men who preached it—Pope Eugenius III and St. Bernard of Clairvaux.

The Second Crusaders had their share of bad luck. Both Conrad and Louis were ambushed by Muslims on their way to Palestine and their armies suffered severely. Consequently, the crusader forces which landed near Antioch and Acre in the spring of 1148 were greatly reduced. To make matters worse, the crusaders made the bad mistake of attacking Damascus. Although Damascus was a Muslim city, it protected Jerusalem and the crusader states in Palestine because its inhabitants were not, as yet, keen to join Nureddin's Holy War.

The crusaders' siege of Damascus, which began on July 24, 1148, lasted only four days. On July 28, after running short of water, the crusaders gave up and withdrew.

Afterwards, many harsh stories were put around accusing the crusaders of taking bribes from the inhabitants of Damascus in return for abandoning the siege. Whether this was true or not, the bungling of the Second Crusade swung public opinion in Damascus in favour of Nureddin. Nureddin gained control of the city in 1154, a success which greatly strengthened his efforts at uniting the Muslims against the Christians in Palestine and Syria.

#### FACT BOX: THE CRUSADER ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD

After the Kingdom of Jerusalem was established, several chivalrous orders of knights played an important part in its defence. Their purpose was both military and religious, and they included the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, the Teutonic Knights, the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem (Knights Hospitaller) and the Order of the Temple of Solomon (Knights Templar).

Of these, the last two orders, both of them largely recruited from Frankish knights, were the best known and most powerful.

The Knights Hospitaller were founded in about 1050, and in Palestine they provided medical care for Christian soldiers and pilgrims. The great castles of Margat and Krak des Chevaliers were both Hospitaller castles, and it was from there that the Knights fought hard after 1187 to keep Saladin's armies at bay. In 1291, after the Muslims captured Acre and crusader rule in Palestine came to an end, the Knights moved to Limassol in Cyprus and there continued to protect pilgrims and care for the sick. From Cyprus, the Knights moved to Rhodes and afterwards to Malta. The emblem of the modern St. John Ambulance Brigade, which today specialises in giving first aid at public gatherings, is taken from the black cross which the Knights Hospitaller wore on their white tunics.

The Knights Templar, founded in 1118, wore a large red cross emblazoned on their white tunics. It was their job to give armed protection to pilgrims, and they worked, too, to discipline and convert to more honest ways the many rogues and robbers who made "pilgrimages" to the Holy Land in hopes of plunder and riches.

The Templars, who lived like monks, had as their motto "first to attack, last to retreat" and they fought many valiant battles against the Muslims. Scores of Templars, including the Templar Grand Master, died at the siege of Acre (1189–1191) and in 1218–1219 they were the great heroes of the siege of Damietta. In 1244, when the Muslims recaptured Jerusalem, 278 out of the 300 Knights Templar helping to defend the city were killed.

The later history of the Templars was a sad one. In 1307 they were accused of heresy and vice. Five years later, after many of their number had been tortured and burnt at the stake, Pope Clement V commanded that the Order be suppressed.



# The Third Crusade

By the end of the 12th century most people looked on crusading as the finest, most noble venture a Christian could undertake. Knights who took the cross were the great heroes of the age and among their number King Richard I of England was the hero of heroes, for he had all the qualifications a true crusader required.

Richard was tall, fair, handsome and a great leader of men. A superb soldier, with a great love of fighting, he had earned his nickname "Lionheart" through many acts of magnificent courage in battle. King Richard and the crusades were truly made for each other, and once the call went out for an army to rescue Jerusalem, Richard could think of little else.



In 1189, the year he became King of England, he raised the money he needed to go on crusade by every possible means. He sold government posts to anyone who would pay for them. He made landowners pay "carucage", a tax levied on every hundred acres of land they owned. He demanded that men unwilling or unable to go on crusade should pay a tax called "sentage". And he freed the Scots king from vassalage to England for 10,000 marks.

With all this money, and a large amount from the treasure his father, King Henry II, had left him, Richard raised a powerful fleet of ships and a considerable army of men. In July, 1190, he left by sea for Palestine. At the same time, King Philip II Augustus set out from France.

Although the two kings were allies in this third crusade, they were not on friendly terms. Philip had long coveted lands in the Angevin Empire, in France, which belonged to Richard and so deep was the distrust between them that both refused to leave on crusade without the other. Even so, like each other or not, trust each other or not, Richard and Philip were to be joint leaders of the Third Crusade. An old prophecy that King Frederick Barbarossa, the Third Crusade leader, would die by water had come true in

Richard the Lionheart dedicated himself to the task of organizing the Third Crusade to rescue Jerusalem.





Guy of Lusignan, Christian King of Jerusalem, found himself hemmed in between the city of Acre and Saladin's forces.

June: on his way to Palestine, Frederick had drowned in a river near Antioch, and his great army of 10,000 men afterwards became so dispirited that many of them returned home to Germany.

Some six months after Barbarossa's death, in the autumn of 1190, Richard and Philip reached Sicily, and after spending the winter there sailed again for Palestine. Philip got there first, disembarking at the port of Acre on April 20, 1191. Richard joined him seven weeks later, on June 8: he had stopped on the way to fight a short, sharp, but successful campaign of conquest in Cyprus, which now became the fifth crusade state.

**How did Philip and Richard reach Palestine?**

By the time Richard and Philip arrived, nearly four years had passed since Saladin's capture of Jerusalem.

**What did Richard and Philip find in Palestine?**

Now, the Christian states were in a sorry plight: almost all their former territory was under Muslim control, apart from the cities of Tyre and Tripoli and a few isolated castles. Wealthier crusaders had bought their freedom from Saladin and had left for Europe, while poorer ones who could not afford the price of ransom were forced to remain.

Obviously the task of the Third Crusade was going to involve much more than the recovery of Jerusalem.

The crusaders' most immediate problem was to capture Acre, which had been besieged since August, 1189 by Guy of Lusignan, Christian King of Jerusalem. Guy's position was extremely difficult: although his armies encircled Acre, they were in their turn surrounded by Saladin and his forces.



After nearly two years, the struggle between Christians and Muslims at Acre had become a stalemate

**What happened in the early days of the siege?**

punctuated by sporadic attacks by one side or the other. Small bands of Christians carrying crosses would swoop down on groups of Muslims, kill as many as they could with swords, maces and battle-axes and then ride off. Sometimes, the Muslims inside Acre would rush out and attack their besiegers. At other times, Saladin's soldiers would ambush a group of Christians and set about them with their long, curved swords. Neither side managed to score a major victory, though, and after a while a strange friendship grew up between them. When they were tired of fighting, the adversaries laid down their weapons and met to chat, sing songs, dance, swap jokes and tell stories. Later, when another battle began, the same Christians and Muslims who had been friends only hours before would start fighting and killing each other once again.

All this changed after Richard and Philip came on the scene. The men they had brought with them were fresh and keen, and had been itching for a whole year to get to grips with the vile Muslims.

The crusaders got to work quickly with siege engines, battering rams and mangonels,

**How did the new arrivals attack Acre?**

which hurled huge stones at the wide walls of the city at great speeds and caused much damage and many casualties. Day after day, night after night, the war machines banged and thumped away, sending frightening thundering noises echoing through the narrow streets of Acre. Meanwhile, the Christian cavalry and infantry continually skirmished with the Muslims. Men fought each other at close quarters with spears and swords while, overhead, the air was thick with flying arrows.

The Muslims were awed by the crusaders' ability to kill a rider and his horse with one thrust of a lance, and they were frustrated by the way the Christians' armour and thick felt jerkins protected them from arrows and swords. One Muslim chronicler wrote of Christians with "up to twenty-one arrows stuck on their bodies, marching no less easily for that." Also, the Muslims were greatly daunted by the heavily armoured and armed crusader knights, each of whom was like a human tank.

With the arrival of Richard and Philip the city of Acre was taken.





Again and again, Saladin tried to bring help to the starving beleaguered garrison, but again and again he failed. Once, he sent secret orders to the Muslims inside Acre to open the gates and force their way out to join his troops. The plan was scotched when the crusaders learned of Saladin's stratagem in advance and sealed all the exits to Acre.

At last, Saladin came to the bitter conclusion that the garrison could not hold out any longer, and he offered to negotiate a truce. It was agreed that the garrison and inhabitants of Acre should pay 200,000 pieces of gold as their ransom, and that 2,500 Christian prisoners would be released.

On July 12, 1191, Richard, Philip and the joyful crusaders marched into Acre and took possession of the city. The first thing they did was tear down the sign of the Crescent, the Muslim emblem, on buildings and houses and replace it with their own sign of the Cross. Tragically, Saladin was late in fulfilling his side of the truce and the great victory at Acre became yet another bloodstained crusader triumph: on Richard's orders, 3,000 unransomed Muslims were executed.

Shortly after this dreadful act of butchery, King Philip resolved to return to France, giving ill-health as an excuse. No amount of persuasion or pleading by his infuriated knights and barons could dissuade him, and on July 31 he departed. Duke Leopold of Austria also left, vowing vengeance on Richard: during a violent quarrel with Leopold, Richard had dealt the duke a frightful insult by tearing down his standard.

**What problems did Richard face?**



Richard and Leopold quarrelled violently and Leopold swore he would have his revenge.

The departure of Philip and Leopold left Richard with two worrying problems. The first was that the French king and the Austrian duke had taken the greater part of the crusading armies with them. The second was the certain knowledge that, once back in France, Philip would attack Richard's Angevin territories. Also, Richard's sly, ambitious brother, Prince John, was bound to make trouble in England.

This was not the end of Richard's worries, though. Acre, with its good food, fine wines, exciting entertainments and luxurious comforts, proved a great temptation to his soldiers, who had never dreamed such a paradise existed. They argued long and loudly that they did not want to leave, but Richard's counter-arguments were louder and longer. He was determined to fulfil his crusader's vow to recapture Jerusalem, and after much bullying, cajoling and threats he managed to gather his forces and march them out of Acre at the end of August.





Saladin gave Richard a present of two Arab horses.

Richard headed southwards in the sizzling heat of the Palestinian summer, driving

**What towns did Richard attack?**

Saladin and his army before him. One after the other, Haifa, Caesarea and Jaffa fell to the crusaders. At Arsuf, on September 7, Richard gave Saladin's men a terrible thrashing and killed thousands of them. All Saladin could do in retaliation was to lay waste the country, and destroy villages and castles as his army retreated, in order that they should not give succour to the advancing Christians.

Because of his exploits, Richard became greatly feared and respected by the Muslims. There is a story that the English king once galloped along the whole front line of the Muslim army with his lance at rest: they were so overawed that not one of them made a move to attack him.

Although they were sworn foes,

**Why were Richard and Saladin friends?**

Richard and Saladin came to admire and respect each other a great deal, both as men and as soldiers. There are many stories of the chivalrous way they treated each other. Once Saladin sent Richard a present of fruit and snow when the king was suffering from fever. On another occasion, Saladin

gave Richard two beautiful Arab horses after Richard's own mount had been killed. Richard, for his part, even offered Saladin his sister, Joan, as a prospective bride for Saladin's brother al-Adil, and suggested that the couple should be given the Holy Land as a wedding present. The proposal came to nothing because both Joan and the Pope were outraged at the idea.

Nevertheless, neither Richard nor Saladin ever forgot they were at war with one another, and

**Why did Richard never capture Jerusalem?**

both of them were determined to emerge from that war as the victor.

After his lightning conquest of the Mediterranean ports, Richard turned inland and headed for Jerusalem in the late autumn of 1191. Now, so near his great goal, Richard began to encounter enormous difficulties. His army was exhausted by sickness, hunger and heat and by the long months of campaigning, and their stores and supplies were getting further and further away.

The approach of winter halted Richard's march to Jerusalem when he was only kilometres away from the city, and though he waited till the following summer and tried again, he knew his army was too weak to succeed.

Richard was so distressed at this bitter fact that when his men pointed



out the spires and towers of Jerusalem in the distance, he covered his face with his shield and refused to look. "If my hand cannot conquer it," he cried, "my eyes shall not behold it!"

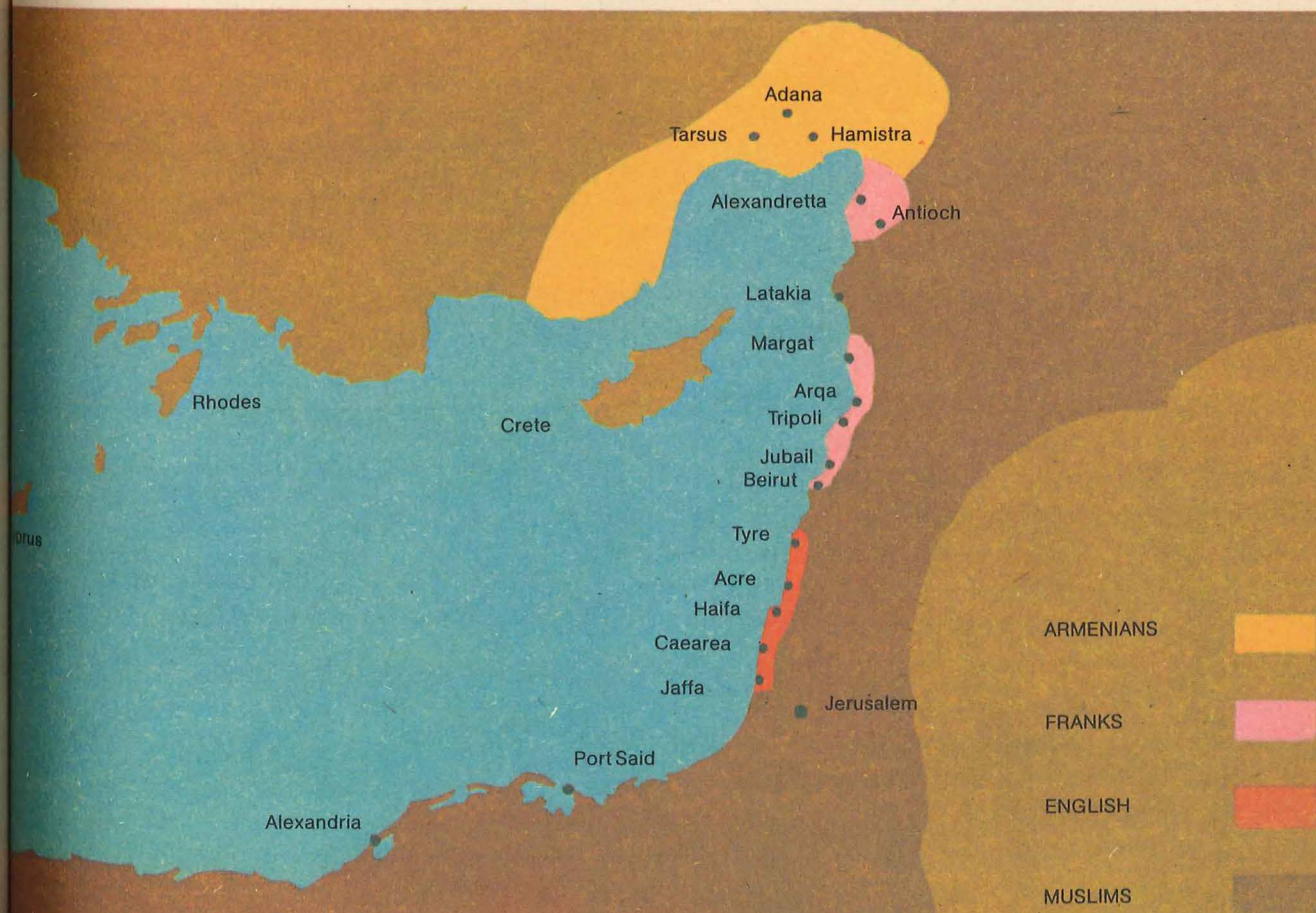
By this time Richard knew that he must soon leave the Holy Land. Philip's attacks on his Angevin lands and John's troublemaking in England were now too serious to ignore and he would have to return home to deal with them. This was why Richard decided, regretfully, to make a treaty with Saladin.

On September 2, 1192, the two leaders agreed that the coast from Tyre to Jaffa, most of which Richard had conquered, should remain in Christian hands: this small strip of land became the second Kingdom of Jerusalem, even though Jerusalem was not included in

it. Richard also obtained a promise from Saladin that Christian pilgrims could visit the holy places in Jerusalem, and that there would be a halt to hostilities for at least three years.

Five weeks later, on October 9, a disappointed and frustrated Richard sailed for home, having achieved much less than he had hoped. In December, on his way through Vienna, the vengeful Duke Leopold of Austria seized him and flung him into prison. Richard remained a prisoner for over a year, until February 1194, when the colossal ransom of 150,000 marks was raised by taxing the people of England.

Richard and Saladin agreed on a peace treaty. Saladin kept the city of Jerusalem.







Leopold had his revenge. Richard was kept a prisoner for over a year.

On March 4, 1193, Saladin died of fever in Damascus.

**What happened after Saladin's death?**

Almost immediately, the Muslim unity he had striven so hard to build up began to disintegrate. Old jealousies, rivalries and quarrels re-emerged and with that there returned to the Muslim world the dangerous weakness of disunity.

This was opportune for the Christians since it gave them a good chance to wipe out their disappointment over the Third Crusade. In 1199 a new expedition was already being planned. However, far from compensating for previous disappointments, it turned out to be the most disreputable venture that ever came to be called a crusade.

#### **FACT BOX: PHILIP II AUGUSTUS OF FRANCE (1165–1223)**

Philip II Augustus was the son of King Louis VII, one of the leaders of the unsuccessful Second Crusade. For ten months before Louis' death in 1180, Philip ruled jointly with him as king of France. After he became sole king, Philip quickly proved himself a strong, determined ruler despite the fact that he was only fifteen years old.

Philip and Richard of England inherited their rivalry from their respective fathers. At the end of 1191, after he left Palestine, Philip began a series of attacks on his rival's lands and actually promised financial help to Richard's captor, Leopold of Austria, to encourage Leopold to prolong Richard's imprisonment.

In 1194, though, Richard was released and returned to inflict several heavy defeats on Philip. Philip got his chance after Richard died in 1199, leaving the throne of England to his far less formidable younger brother, John. In the years that followed, John was virtually helpless as Philip took many Angevin lands, including Normandy, Touraine, Anjou and most of Poitou. Philip even had ideas of seizing the English throne, and put up his son Louis as a candidate for king.

Although this particular plan failed, Philip II is counted among the best and most able kings of France, energetic, strong-willed, a clever politician and a monarch who attracted and retained the loyalty of all his subjects. Philip died at Mantes on July 14, 1223.



# The Not-so-Noble Crusades

The Fourth Crusade has been called a farce, a fiasco, a travesty and a tragedy. Whatever uncomplimentary name was given to it, though, this thoroughly ignoble expedition certainly gave Christians plenty of cause for shame and shock, and their Muslim enemies a prize chance to jeer, sneer and rejoice. Afterwards, when the time came to apportion blame, many people decided that the chief villain of the Fourth Crusade was the Republic of Venice.

At that time, Venice was a wealthy city state with flourishing trade, a fine fleet of ships and many overseas possessions, all of which aroused great jealousy among other Italian cities, like Genoa. Also, Venetians had a bad name for their greed, their double-dealing and their haughty ways.

**What part did Venice play in the crusade?**

Nevertheless, when the leaders of the Fourth Crusade began to consider how to transport their troops and equipment, Venice was the obvious place to go. The Venetians agreed to provide ships to carry 4,500 horses, 9,000 knights and 20,000 foot-soldiers and enough provisions to last a year. In return, the Venetians demanded 85,000 silver marks and half of all the crusaders' conquests. It was a heavy price, and it was also too high, for the crusaders could raise only 51,000 marks. The Venetians would not sail until all the money was forthcoming and so the crusaders, who had gathered in Venice in the spring of 1201, were

stranded there with debts for food and supplies in their camps mounting up day by day.

Then, Enrico Dandolo, the blind 90-year-old Doge (Duke) of Venice, came up with a cunning solution. The territories of Zara and Dalmatia (Yugoslavia) had rebelled against Venice in 1166 and were threatening Venetian trade in the Adriatic Sea. Dandolo wanted the crusaders' help in overcoming them.

It was an outrageous suggestion, but despite vigorous protests from Pope Innocent III and howls of anger from more sincere crusaders, Marquis Boniface of Montferrat, leader of the crusade, agreed.

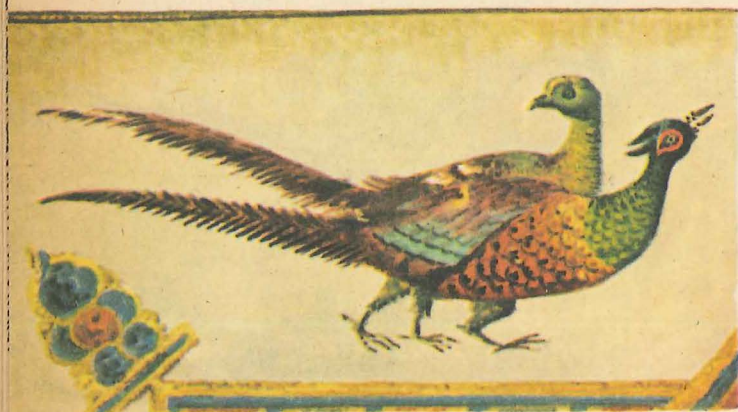
Venice was a wealthy city state, and the Doge wanted to expand her territory.



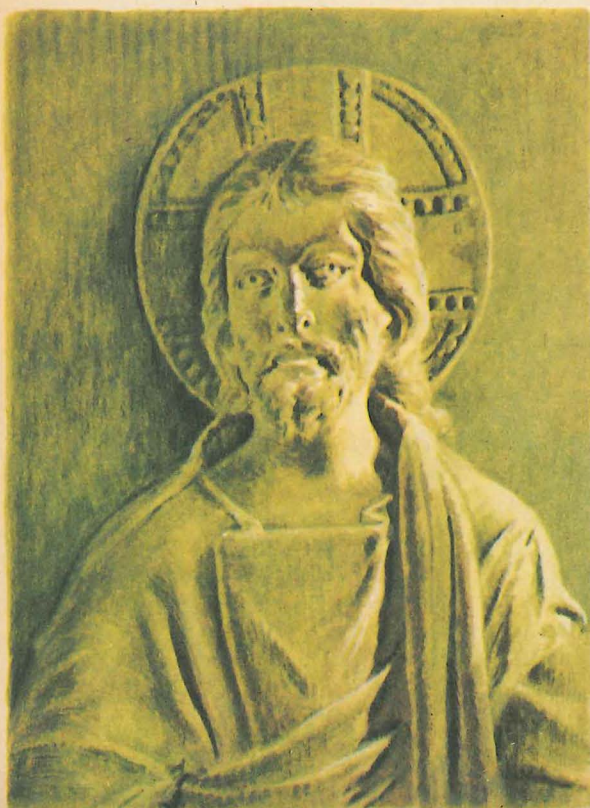




A dome mosaic of Christ at Arta in Epirus (about 1300).



A detail from an illumination from the Book of Gospels (about 110).



A tenth century ivory carving of Christ.

In November 1202 the crusading forces stormed Zara, a Christian city, and looted it. As punishment for this sacrilegious act, Pope Innocent excommunicated every crusader who had taken part.

Worse, much worse, was to come. The wily Venetians now persuaded the crusaders to help them in another disreputable plan: this was to dethrone the Byzantine Emperor and put a pro-Venetian monarch, Alexius IV, in his place. Once again, the crusaders agreed. Once again, the Christian world was shocked and disgusted to learn that men who had taken the Cross had besieged, captured and pillaged a Christian city. This was the fate of Constantinople on April 12, 1204, when the crusaders overwhelmed it and, possessed by a frenzy of greed, set about stripping the Byzantine capital of thousands of pounds, worth of gold and silver ornaments, jewelled crosses, chalices, candelabra and other priceless objects.

The crusaders had acted like bandits and barbarians and, not unnaturally, their reprehensible behaviour aroused great hatred among the Byzantines. This hatred was all the stronger because after Alexius IV was deposed the crusaders set up their own "Latin" emperor in his place.

Left: A lead seal belonging to Bohemund (twelfth century).  
Right: An enamelled cross belonging to Pope Pascal I (ninth century).







Previous crusades had, of course, been marked by greed, brutality, ambition and bad faith, but never

**What went wrong with the Fifth Crusade?**

on the appalling scale that occurred at Zara and Constantinople. Bad management, too, had not been absent during former crusading years, and when it came to the Fifth Crusade, bungling stupidity turned out to be its dominant characteristic.

This time, the crusaders' objective was the port of Damietta in Egypt, which they hoped to capture and hold hostage for the return of Jerusalem. The crusade, led by John de Brienne, titular King of Jerusalem, very nearly succeeded, and failed to do so only through the stubbornness and lack of sense shown by Cardinal Pelagius of Albano, the papal legate.

In June 1218, John de Brienne began

The Fifth Crusade came to an end when the crusaders were trapped by a Nile flood at Mansurah.

a siege of Damietta which lasted seventeen months before Sultan al-Kamil of Egypt gave in and offered to restore to the crusaders the whole Kingdom of Jerusalem west of the River Jordan: in exchange, the Sultan proposed, the crusaders would leave Egypt.

The great prize of Jerusalem was actually being handed over by the enemy, and yet Cardinal Pelagius refused it: he had ambitious ideas of conquering the whole of Egypt. Damietta fell to the crusading armies on November 5, 1219, but in the next two years the Egyptians put up such strong resistance that Pelagius came nowhere near to fulfilling his ambitions. The end came in August, 1221 when the crusaders were trapped at Mansurah by a Nile flood and Pelagius was forced to restore Damietta to the Egyptians.



If the Fourth Crusade had been dishonourable and the Fifth a stupid failure, the Sixth

**Why was Emperor Frederick a bad crusader?**

was utterly reprehensible and showed in most scandalous fashion how taking the Cross had become an excuse for greed and personal ambition.

The leader of the Sixth Crusade was Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Germany and Sicily. Frederick was a clever man, but possessed some horrible habits, like his fondness for using his serfs as human guinea-pigs in bizarre scientific experiments. Frederick had no religious beliefs and once said that "all the misfortunes of Mankind are due to three impostors—Moses, Mohamed and Christ."

Frederick turned his ship back after a few kilometres because he felt sea-sick.

The Emperor's most notable characteristics, in fact, were covetousness and opportunism and he fulfilled his crusading vow, made in 1215, purely for the sake of getting his hands on the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The chance to do so came his way in 1225, when he married 14-year-old Yolande Isabella, daughter of John de Brienne and heiress to the throne of Jerusalem.

Through his young wife, the Kingdom

**Why was Frederick excommunicated?**

could be his and in September, 1227, Frederick

sailed for the Holy Land in gleeful anticipation of the greatest prize Christendom had to offer. He was not many kilometres out to sea, though, before he turned back, complaining of seasickness. The rest of his fleet continued across the Mediterranean towards the port of Acre.

Pope Gregory IX was so enraged and so certain that Frederick was going back on his vows that he excommunicated him. Frederick, a virtual atheist, was not at all bothered and in the summer of 1228 he set out again.





To most Christians, the idea of an excommunicate like Frederick, a virtual outlaw from Christian

**What happened during the Sixth Crusade?**

society, actually leading a crusade to the Holy Land was shocking enough. But even more shocking and astounding were Frederick's actions when he got there.

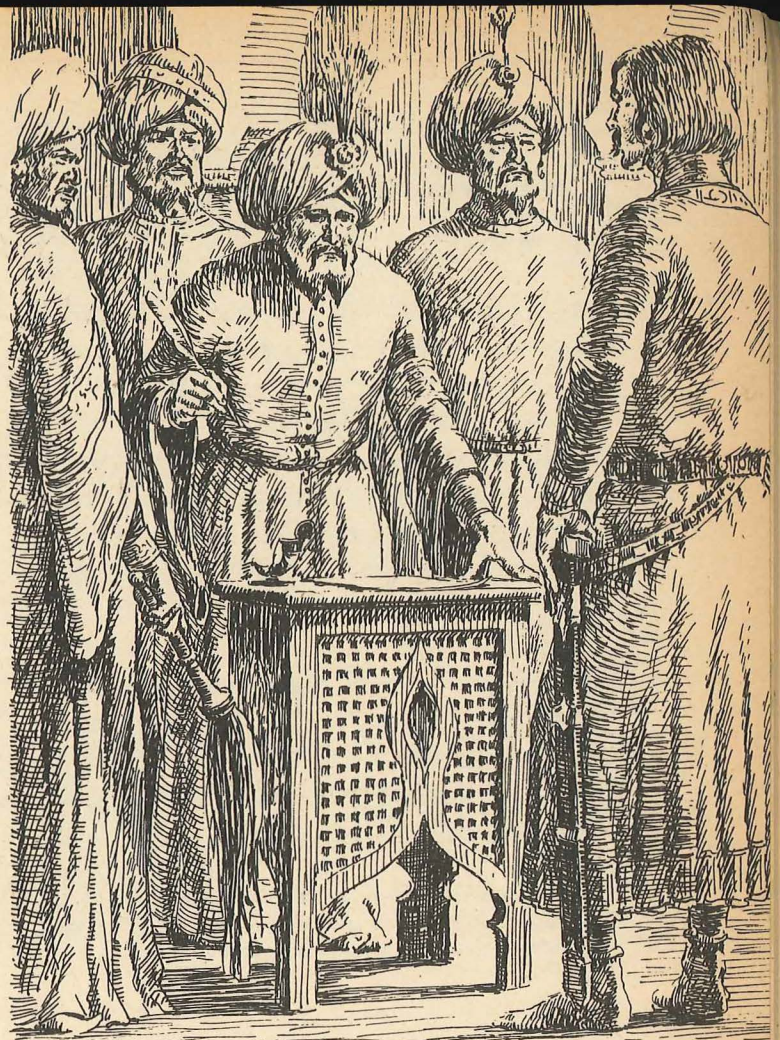
The crusaders did a little token fighting against the Muslims, but nothing very energetic, and then Frederick began negotiating with Sultan al-Kamil of Egypt. The Sultan offered Frederick much the same terms as those he had proposed to Cardinal Pelagius ten years before. Unlike Pelagius, Frederick accepted them, and a treaty was signed on February 18, 1229.

The horrified reaction this produced in Europe was perfectly understandable. Christians believed,

**Why were Christians so horrified?**

quite sincerely, that crusaders ought to fight and kill the Muslim enemies of Christ, not make treaties with them. This feeling took a lot of pleasure out of the considerable gains Frederick had made. He had retrieved from the Muslims the three main places of Christian pilgrimage—Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth—as well as Sidon and Lydda. He had also obtained Muslim agreement to a ten-year period of peace in Palestine.

Far from rejoicing at Frederick's diplomatic achievement, the Pope took an angry revenge on him. He began a "crusade" of his own by sending his armies to attack Frederick's lands in Italy, and he also placed Jerusalem under interdict: this meant the city was "out of bounds" for all true Christians.



Frederick signed a treaty with Sultan al-Kamil of Egypt which horrified European Christians.

Because of the interdict, church bells throughout Jerusalem were silent as Frederick rode into the city.

**How did Frederick become King of Jerusalem?**

However, nothing the Pope could do could take from Frederick the thrill and glory of what followed. Frederick entered the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where the crown of Jerusalem was kept on the altar, and there he placed the crown on his own head and proclaimed himself king.

The millions of Christians who came to believe that Frederick's heinous sins would be punished by disaster were proved tragically right during the years that followed.



After Frederick left Acre for home on May 1, 1229,

**What happened after Frederick's departure?**

to face a barrage of criticism and scorn, the crusaders he left behind in Palestine frittered away his gains by stupid squabbles and rivalries. They had no strong, determined leader to discipline them or organise their efforts towards preserving the territories the Sixth Crusade had brought them. Instead, the crusaders took sides against each other and supported warring factions among the equally contentious Muslims. The Knights Templar, for instance, sided with the Muslims of Syria against the Muslims of Egypt, who were being backed in their turn by the Knights Hospitaller.

The Muslims of Egypt realised that the Mongols were a great threat. With the help of the Khwarizmians, the Muslims defeated the Mongols at the battle of Gaza.

While all this was going on, a great new danger was drawing nearer and nearer. It

**What was the great danger from Asia?**

came from Central Asia, in the form of the warlike barbarian Mongols who, until his death in 1227, had been led by the famous Genghis Khan.

By 1241, the Mongols were fast approaching the shores of the eastern Mediterranean, conquering one territory after the other with no one, apparently, strong enough or determined enough to stop them.

It was the Muslims of Egypt who first woke up to the danger and resolved to challenge it. In doing so, the Egyptians had an additional motive: they saw in the coming conflict with the Mongols not only a chance to save the Muslim world, but a prize opportunity to topple the Christians in Palestine.







Very few children survived the Children's Crusade.

In 1244, the Egyptians made an alliance with the

**How did the Muslims recover Jerusalem?**

Khwarizmians, a people who had been forced by the Mongols to leave their lands by the Caspian Sea. Together, the Egyptians and Khwarizmians defeated the crusader armies at the battle of Gaza. The inevitable, grim sequel came in July 1244, when the Khwarizmians burst into Jerusalem, overran the crusader garrison there and won back the city for the Muslims.

Twelve months later, Sultan Ayyub of Egypt was in possession of almost all of crusader Palestine.

#### **FACT BOX: THE CHILDRENS CRUSADE OF 1212**

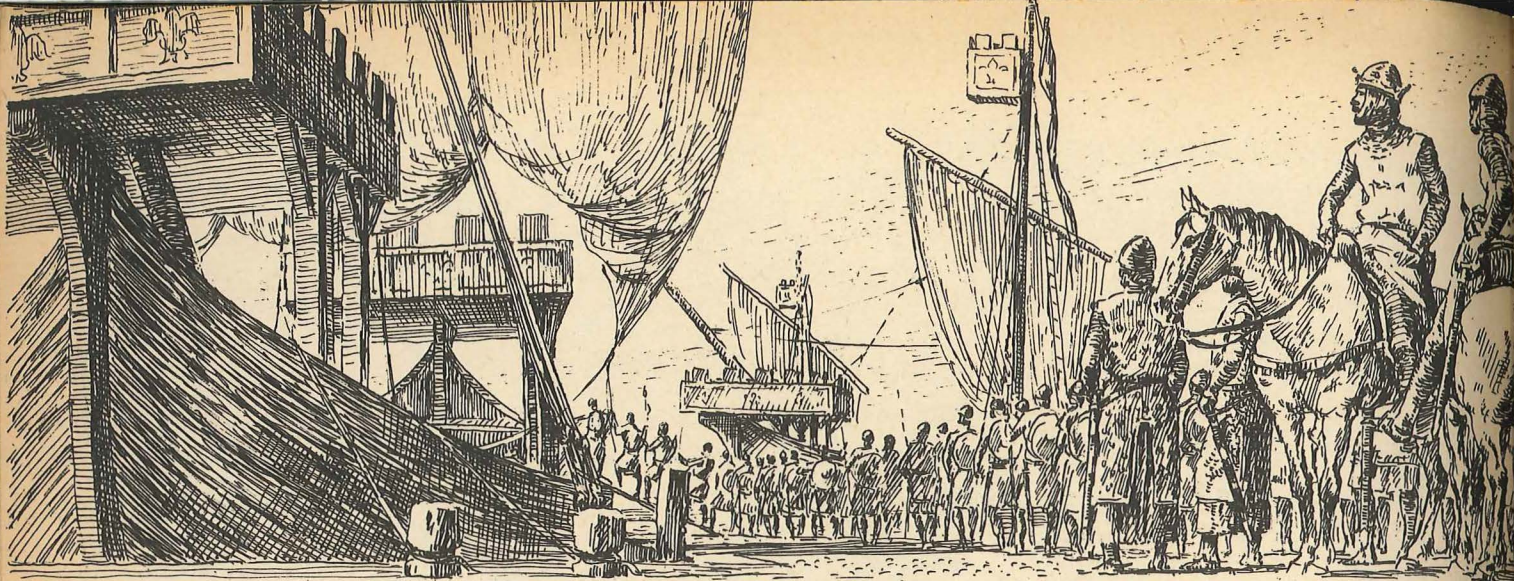
One of the most touching and tragic episodes to take place during the crusades was the Children's Crusade of 1212.

In May that year, a young shepherd boy called Stephen appeared in towns and villages in France

calling on children to follow him on crusade. He had, he said, seen a vision in which he was told that the Holy Land would be liberated from the Muslims by youngsters like himself. Thousands of children responded and left their homes to follow Stephen to Marseilles, in the south of France. There, remembering how in the Old Testament, the Red Sea had parted to let the children of Israel through, the young crusaders waited patiently for the Mediterranean to do the same thing so that they could walk along the sea bed to the Holy Land. At this juncture, two wily shipowners, William the Pig and Hugh the Iron, offered the children transport. The children accepted, only to find themselves sailing to North Africa, where they were sold as slaves. The sole survivor out of the thousands who had followed Stephen returned to France in 1230, after spending eighteen years in slavery.

Another children's crusade took place after Nicholas, a young boy from Cologne, Germany, claimed he had seen similar visions to Stephen's. The children who followed Nicholas were no luckier than their French counterparts. Thousands of them died of cold and from accidents as they struggled over the Alps into Italy. In Italy, thousands more died from hunger and exhaustion. Finally, the Bishop of Brindisi ordered the children to go home. They obeyed and turned back, but very few ever reached Germany. Many of their parents were so grief-stricken that they hanged Nicholas's father for encouraging his son.





King Louis IX of France believed it was his duty to go on crusade.

## The Last of the Crusades

By the mid-13th century, crusading had become so thoroughly discredited that, for many people, it was little more than a bad joke. After the irresponsible Marquis of Montferrat, the wilful Cardinal Pelagius and the abominable Emperor Frederick, would-be crusaders were likely to be regarded, at best, as fools and, at worst, as greedy opportunists. More and more people were becoming convinced that God had no interest in crusades and that the whole idea was useless nonsense.

Yet, despite all the cynicism, sincere crusading zeal was still strong among more honourable men, and in 1244 there was at least one leader willing to take the Cross whose character was beyond question.

King Louis IX of France (St. Louis)

**Who was this new leader?**


was strong, just, wise, devout, conscientious and generous. He had very high ideals

about his responsibilities as king, and his views of a Christian's duty to go on crusade were just as exalted.

Louis took his crusading vows late in 1244, but nearly four years passed before his venture was ready to depart. At the end of August, 1248, Louis embarked at Aigues-Mortes, in the south of France, with 2,500 knights, 5,000 crossbowmen and large numbers of infantry and cavalry. They sailed first to Cyprus and then, in May, 1249, to Damietta in Egypt. What happened after Louis arrived there provided almost a repeat performance of the Fifth Crusade.

Like the army of John de Brienne, Louis' forces besieged and, in June, 1248, captured Damietta. Sultan Ayyub of Egypt offered Louis Jerusalem in exchange. Louis refused and determined to conquer Egypt instead. The Egyptians fought back and on February 8, 1250, defeated Louis' armies at Mansurah, the very same place where





the armies of the Fifth Crusade had met disaster in 1221. This time, the Nile did not flood and trap the crusaders, but Louis was taken prisoner and he and his followers had to pay nearly one million gold pieces as ransom.

After gaining his freedom in May, 1250, Louis went to Acre. He spent four years in Palestine helping to fortify crusader castles there and paying ransoms for hundreds of Christians held captive by the Muslims.

Louis was not deterred by his failure in Egypt, and he longed to go on another crusade.

**When did Louis go crusading again?**

Thirteen years passed before he was able to do so, but when, in March, 1267, he announced his intention to take the Cross again, his nobles and courtiers tried to dissuade him. One of Louis' friends, John Sieur de Joinville, told the king to his face that this latest crusade, the Eighth, was pure folly.

The crusade proved to be something much more tragic than that. On July 1, 1270, Louis sailed from Aigues-Mortes bound for Tunisia where, it was planned, a base would be established for another attack on Egypt. The attack never took place. Almost as soon as Louis' forces landed, they were struck down by an epidemic of bubonic plague. Louis was himself one of the victims, and died near Tunis on August 26, 1270. As he died, Louis is said to have whispered in broken-hearted tones: "Jerusalem! Jerusalem!"

Louis' death was all the more tragic and wasteful because in going to Tunisia in the first

**Why did Louis' brother betray him?**

place, he had been betrayed by his own brother, King Charles of Sicily. Charles hated the Byzantines and thought

Louis' crusade might interfere with the war he was preparing against them: so he persuaded his brother to go to Tunisia. Charles also had an extra motive for his action—his friendship with a powerful Muslim leader, Sultan Baybars of Egypt.

Sultan Baybars belonged to the Mameluke warrior

**Who was Baybars?**

caste, which was

made up of slaves from Turkey, Russia and central Asia. Already, by 1270, he was the great hero of the Muslim world. It was Baybars who, on September 3, 1260, had led the Egyptian armies to a decisive victory against the Mongols at Ayn Jalut and so finally rescued the Muslim world from the threat of Mongol domination. It was also Baybars who roused the Muslims to action by preaching a new Jihad, this time against the Mongols, whom he drove out of Syria and Palestine and back towards Persia and Armenia.

Many Mongols were so impressed by Baybars' courage, prowess and fighting skill that they adopted the Muslim faith, believing it to be the religion of strong men.

Louis never reached the Holy Land.



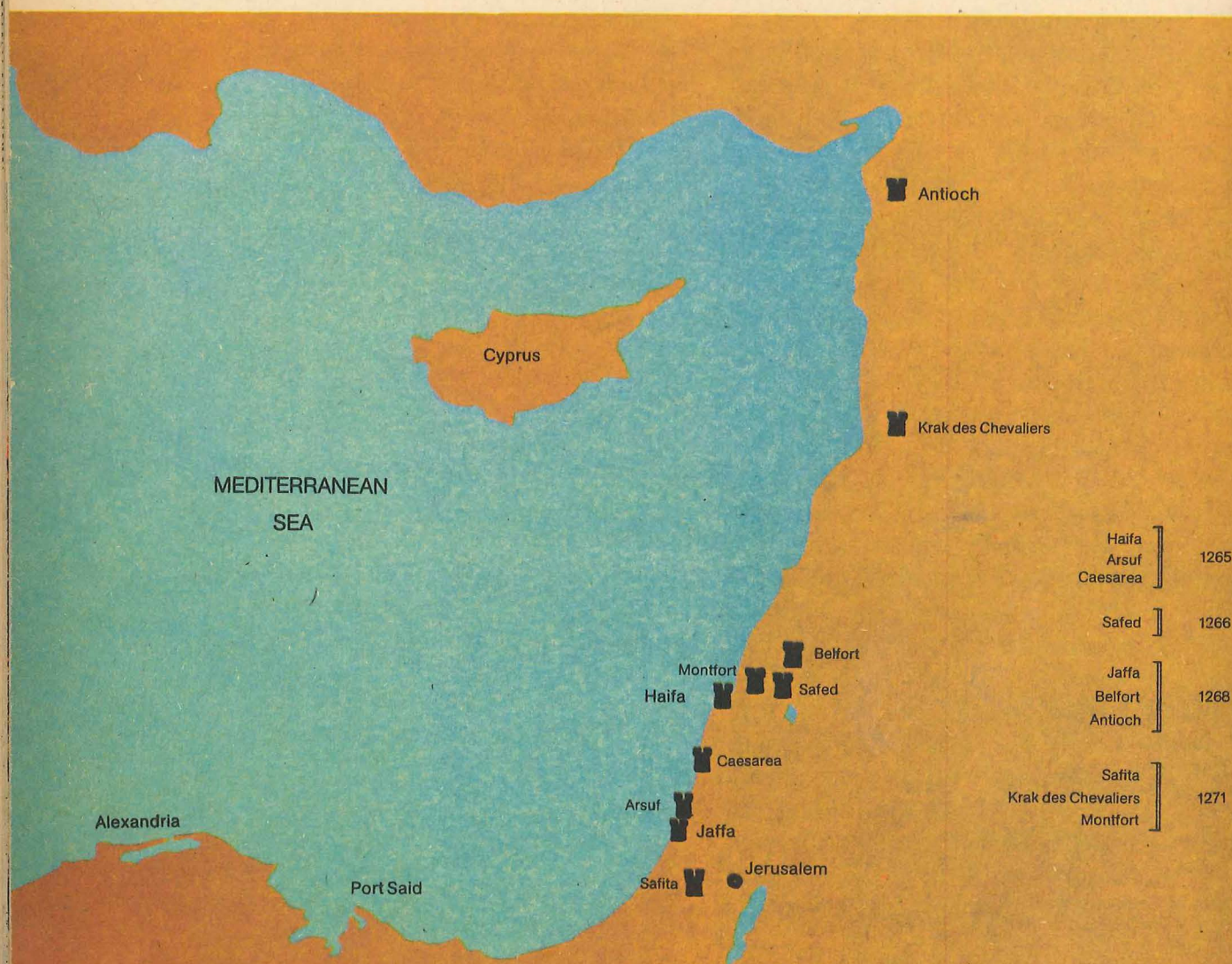


In all this, the squabbling and therefore divided crusaders were nothing but helpless bystanders. Before long, though, they were inevitably caught up in Baybars' campaigns. As Baybars and his Mameluke army swept through Palestine and Syria, the crusaders were thrown out of Caesarea, Haifa and Arsuf in 1265, the castle of Safed in 1266 and in 1268 out of Jaffa, the castle of Belfort and Antioch. In a few short years, the narrow coastal strip which Richard Lionheart had formed into the second Kingdom of Jerusalem had shrunk away, and the crusaders were holding on only in small, isolated towns and lonely fortifications.

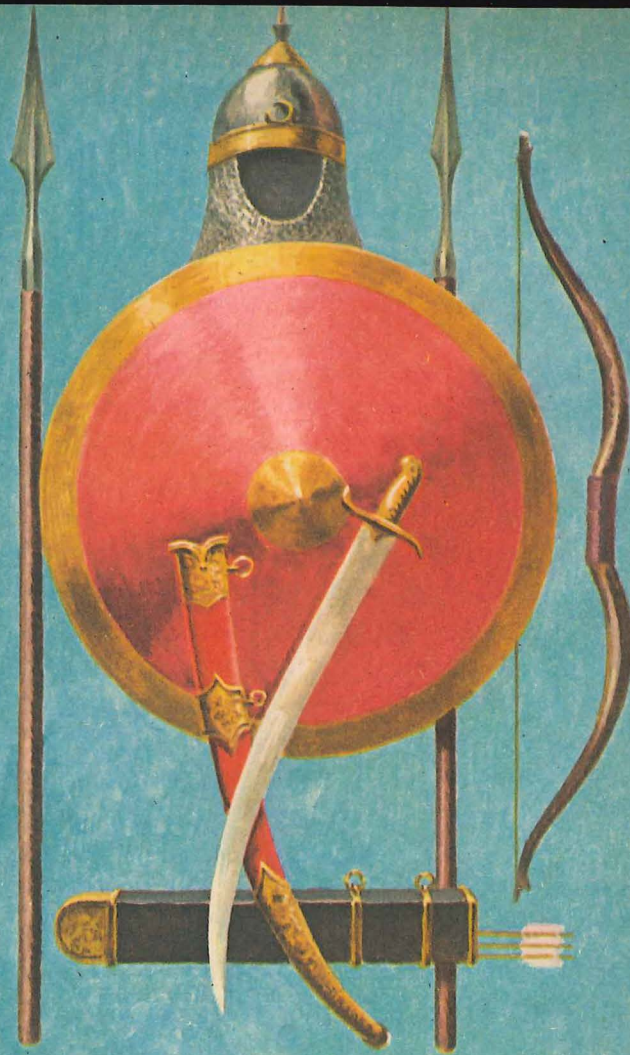
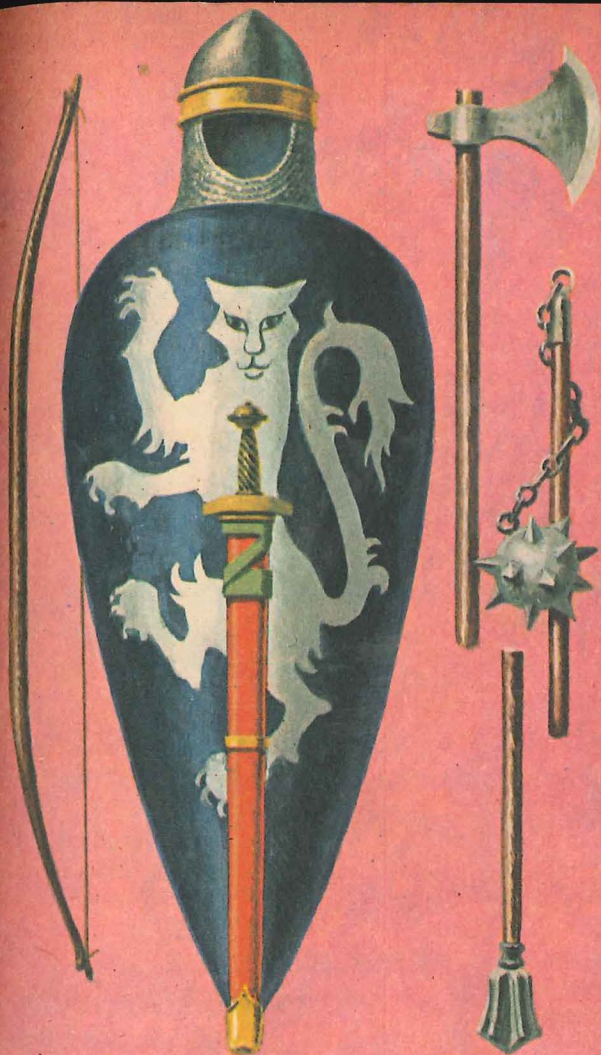
**How were the crusaders affected?**

All Baybars had to do now was to pick them off one by one. This did not happen immediately because, when King Louis began to prepare his crusade in 1267, Baybars became uneasy and this took some of the bite out of his attacks. For the beleaguered Christians, the reprieve was brief. After Louis died in Tunisia, Baybars' worries were over and he resumed his onslaughts with undiminished vigour. In 1271 his forces overwhelmed the last three inland castles held by the crusaders—Safita, Krak des Chevaliers, near Tripoli, and Montfort.

Baybars gradually captured all the crusaders' castles.







Once, a great crusade would have been preached

**Why was there no new crusade?**

throughout Europe to relieve the hard-pressed Christians in the Holy Land. Wandering priests would have travelled from village to village to inflame the people with terrible stories of Baybars' brutalities. They would have had plenty of material: Baybars was no chivalrous, scrupulous Saladin, but a merciless, savage warrior intent on the complete extermination of his enemies. Many of his victories against the crusaders had been accompanied by the most atrocious massacres.

Under the hammer-blows of Baybars' attacks, the crusader states in Palestine were dying. Yet there was no great rescue operation this time, for now the ideal of crusading was dying,

Left: Some of the weapons used by the crusaders.  
Right: Some of the weapons used by the Muslims.

too. In many European countries, a new sense of nationalism was stirring, and men were now more concerned with what was happening in their own lands than in foreign regions far away. In addition, the Pope was losing his power to command or even inspire men to take the Cross.

There was still some interest, of course, but nothing very effective, or even enthusiastic. King James I of Aragon took crusading vows and set out, but turned for home when he was halfway to Palestine. King Edward I of England, who had originally intended to join Louis IX's last, ill-fated crusade, arrived in Acre in May, 1271, but though he stayed until September, 1272, he achieved very little.



Sultan Baybars died of fever in Damascus in 1277, but his work was carried

**What happened at the siege of Acre?**

on by his equally enterprising successors. Sultan Qalawun overran Christian Tripoli in 1289 and celebrated his victory as Baybars would have done, by cutting the throats of the men and taking the women and children as slaves.

Two years later, in April 1291, Qalawun's son, Sultan al-Ashraf Khalil, laid siege to the great crusader bastion of Acre with an army of 66,000 cavalry and 160,000 foot-soldiers. The 14,000 soldiers and 800 knights inside Acre resisted with almost suicidal courage, but they were no match for the Muslims. Khalil's forces loosed thousands of feathered arrows and darts down on the Christians, and with their mangonels hurled scores of boulders over the walls. The Muslims also used a terrifying flame-weapon called "Greek Fire" which, once alight, could not be extinguished. John Sieur de Joinville described how Greek Fire had "a burning tail . . . the length of a long sword. In flight, it made a noise like thunder and it seemed a dragon flying through the air."

On May 18, 1291—a Friday and the holy day of the Muslims—the Muslim war drums could be heard thundering out all round Acre as the armies of Khalil massed for a final, mighty onslaught on the walls.

The attack succeeded, and the Muslims poured into the city, brandishing swords and other deadly weapons. They ran wild through the streets, cutting down everyone they encountered, and soon grisly heaps of

dead bodies began to pile up all over Acre.

Three months later, in August 1291, the Christians in Tyre, Beirut, Tortosa and

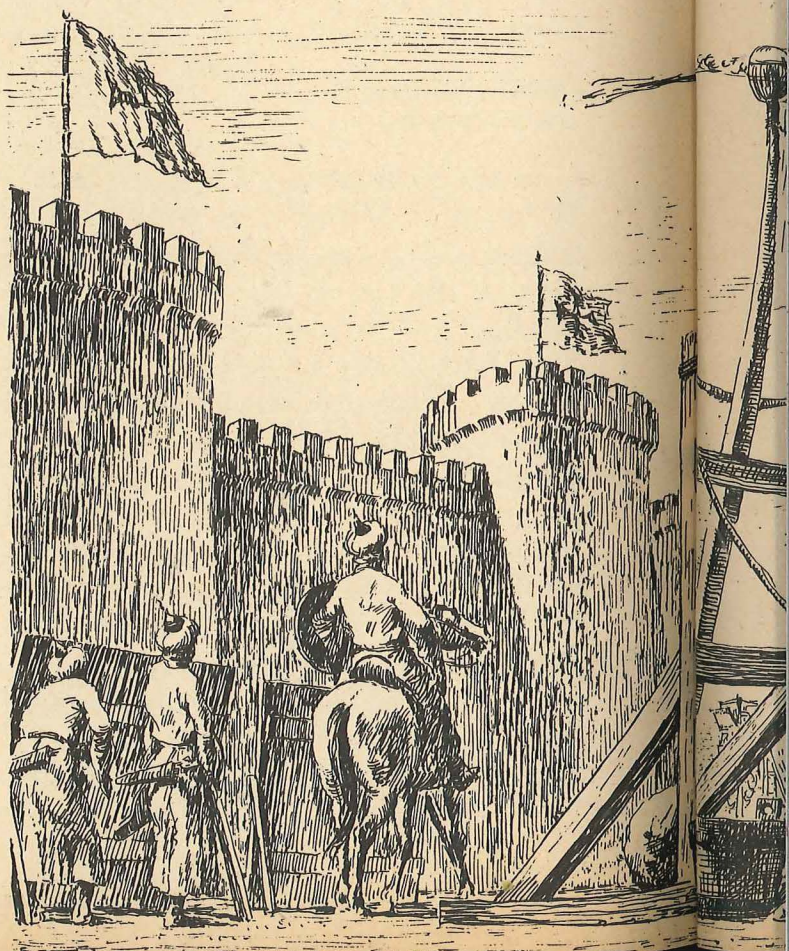
**How did crusader rule end?**

Athlit surrendered to the Muslims without a fight, and at Sidon they put up only feeble resistance. The last remnant of the crusader presence in the Holy Land clung on until 1303, when some Knights Templar holding out on the tiny island of Arwad, two miles out to sea from Tortosa, finally gave in.

So, after two centuries, the crusades came to an ignominious end, with final triumph going to the Muslims.

As you have seen, crusading had its good and its bad side. It involved glory and infamy, sincerity and insincerity, mercy and brutality, mag-

**What were the bad results of the crusades?**





nanimity and treachery.

The legacy of the crusades was similarly paradoxical.

One terrible effect was the fatal weakening of the Byzantine Empire, which never recovered from the shameful crusader attack on Constantinople in 1204. Another tragic result was a marked increase in religious intolerance between Christian and Muslim, Christian and Jew and even between Christian and Christian: during and after the crusades, Christians regarded with extra hatred others of their own faith whose ideas about religion were different from their own.

Nevertheless, there was a more positive side to the aftermath of the crusades.

**How did the crusades affect European life?**

The most far-reaching and significant effect was the way the ultimate failure of the crusades obliged Europeans to look for a sea route to Asia now that the

Muslims had blocked the land route to Asia's tempting store of spices, silks, ivory, precious metals, precious stones and other luxuries. Eventually, the urge to reach these riches led to the 15th and 16th century explorations by Portuguese, Spanish, French and English sailors, explorations which finally opened up the world.

These explorers owed much to the fact that during and after the crusades the Muslims' superior knowledge of science, mathematics, medicine, hygiene, navigation and geography greatly improved European knowledge of these subjects.

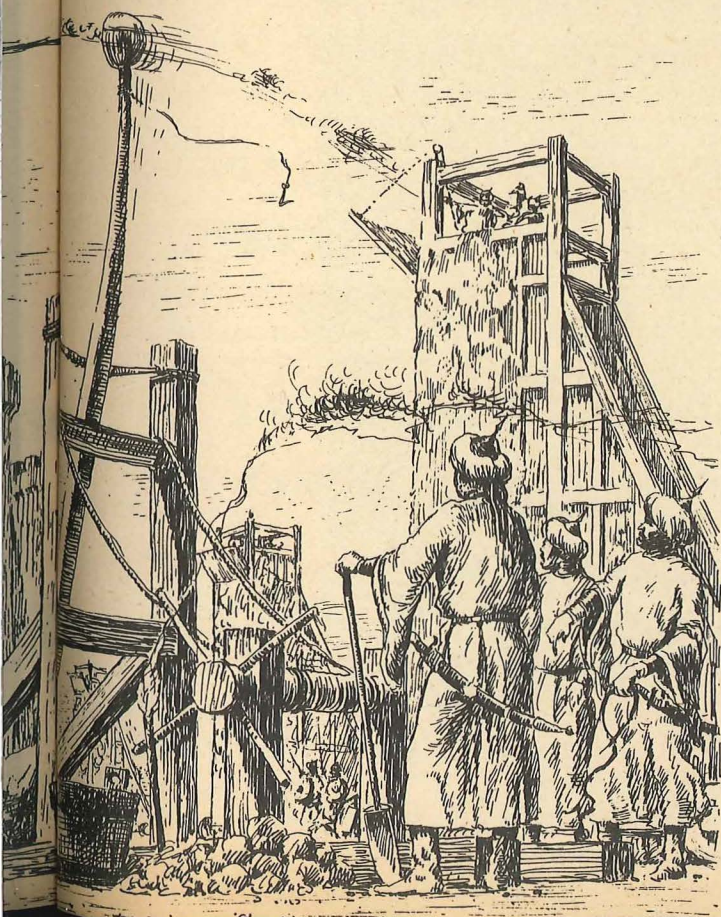
The crusades also prompted a considerable increase in trade, with a consequent rise in living standards in Europe. European merchants imported from Muslim lands more spices, furnishings, medicines, jewellery, perfumes, fruits, sugar and other commodities than ever before. In return the Muslims received European grain, timber and horses. They also received a constant stream of Christian pilgrims and so profited from a thriving tourist trade in tours of the Holy Land and sales of mass-produced souvenirs.

In addition, the crusades provided the inspiration for a great new literature in the form of legends, stories and chronicles

**How did the crusades affect literature and language?**

and songs like the famous Chansons de Geste, which told romantic tales of chivalrous knights and their noble deeds.

European languages were also affected by the crusades. Muslim words, borrowed and adapted by the



The armies of Khalil massed for a final onslaught on Acre.



crusaders, introduced "syrup", "sherbet", "elixir", "divan", "candy" as well as the sinister-sounding "assassin" to the English language.

Perhaps, though, the most important word we have acquired from this period of history is the word "crusade" itself. Originally, "crusade", taken from the Spanish word "cruzada", meant "marked with a cross". Today, it is commonly used to describe a determined attack on evil practices or on evil people who seek to oppress others.

Although this is, of course, the modern meaning of "crusade", it does help explain how the original crusaders thought, and why they acted, at times, in ways we find shocking and brutal. Rightly or mistakenly, sincere crusaders viewed their task as a holy fight against evil, and it was in that spirit that they ventured to a strange, distant and inhospitable land with the Cross of their faith emblazoned on their breasts and the resolve to fight for Christ burning fiercely in their hearts.

The Crusades inspired many legends. One of these was the story of Tristan and Isolde



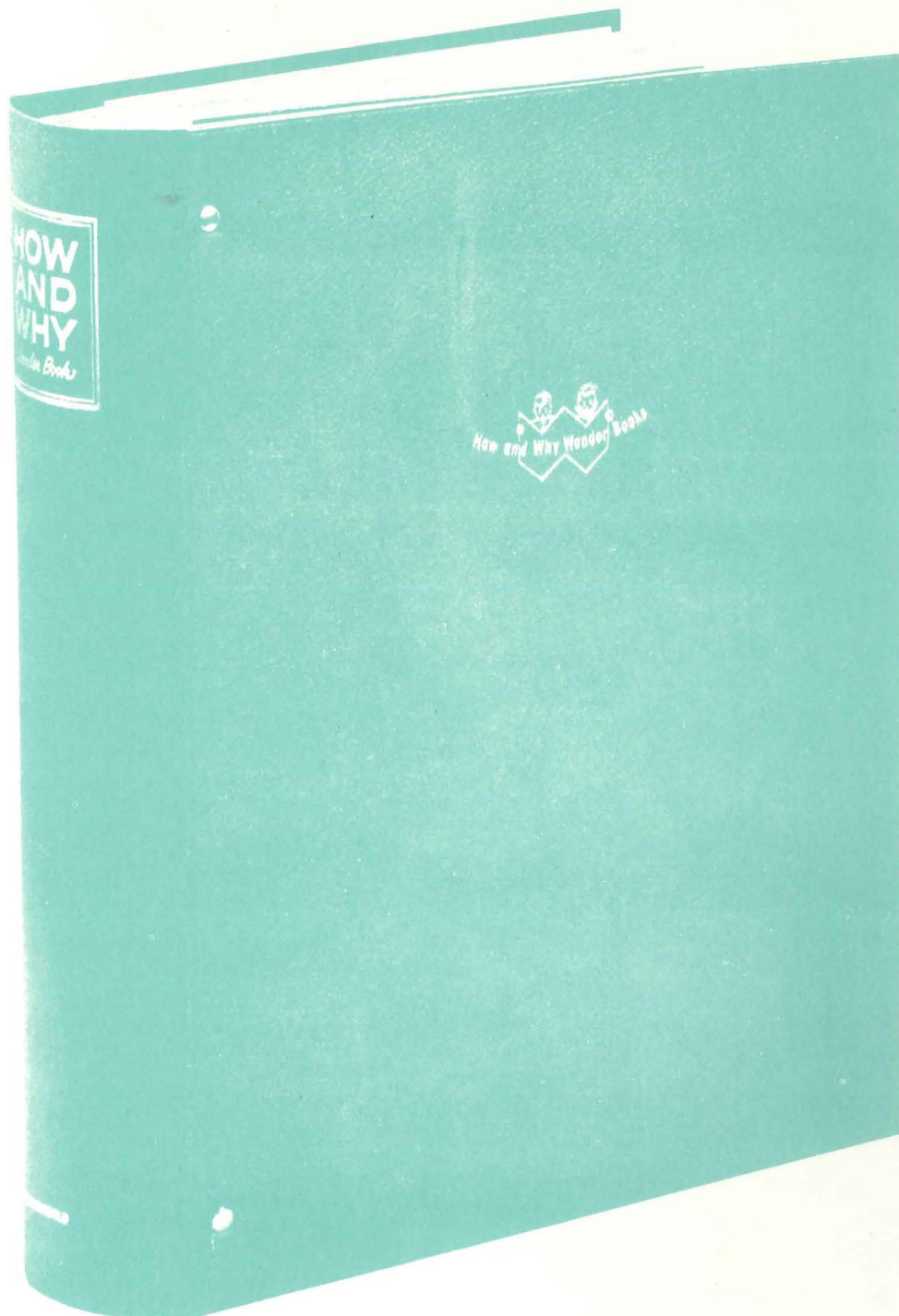
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